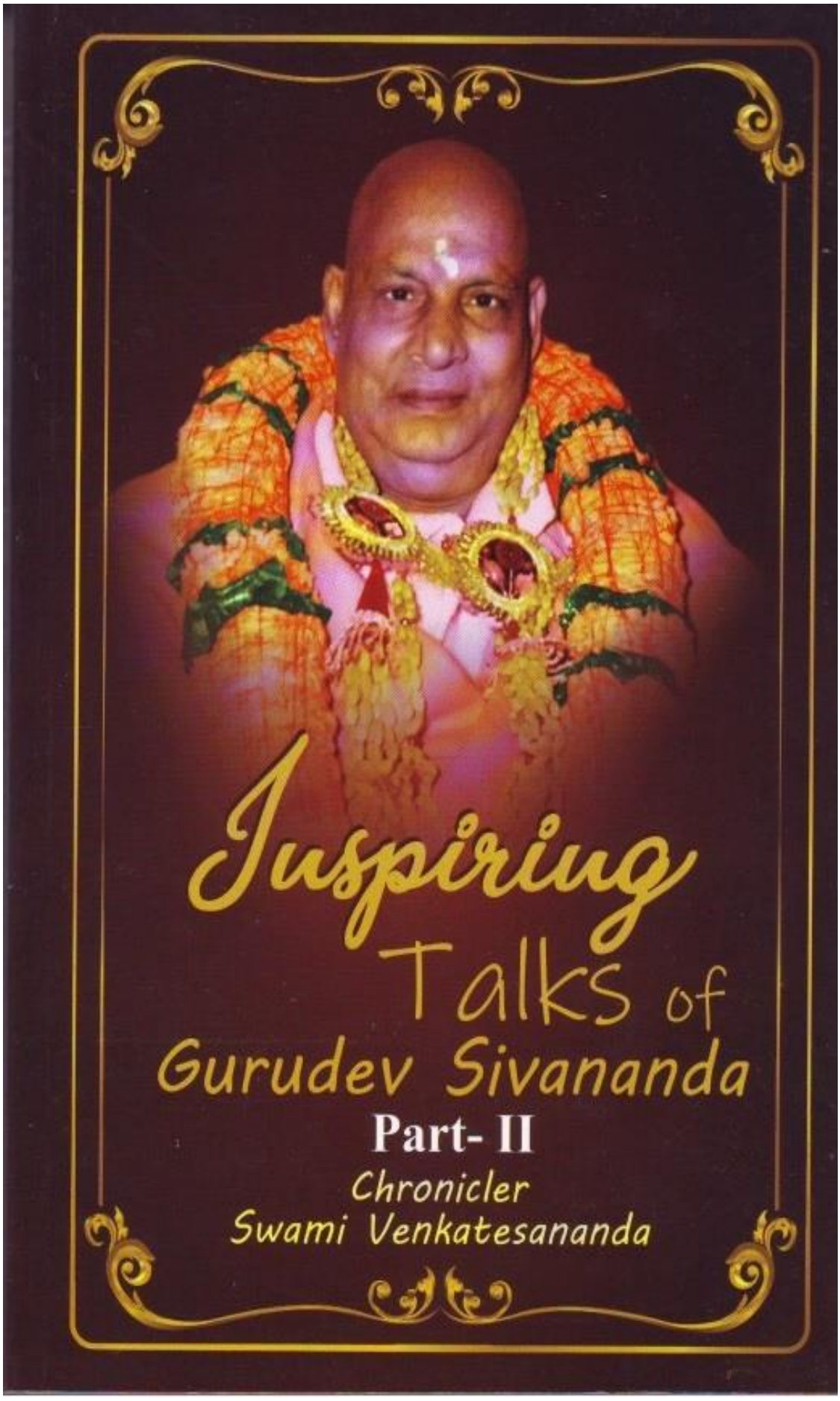
Inspiring
Talks of
Gurudev Sivananda
Part- II
Chronicler
Swami Venkatesananda

Inspiring

TALKS

OF

GURUDEV SIVANANDA

Chronicler

SIVA-PADA-RENU

SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

(PART-II)

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

We are immensely delighted to offer the second edition of 'INSPIRING TALKS OF GURUDEV SIVANANDA' to the devotees and disciples of the Holy Master.

'Inspiring Talks of Gurudev Sivananda' is a beautiful chronicle by Revered Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj who had the blessed privilege of sitting at the sacred feet of Sri Gurudev and listening to every word and watching every action of Beloved Master. Sri Swamiji Maharaj has recorded his observations of two years from March 1948 to July 1950 and presented them chronologically in his book. Sri Swamiji's unique and inimitable style of narration makes the reader feel as if he himself is sitting at the lotus feet of Sri Gurudev at Ananda Kutir and listening to his nectarine words.

This inspiring book is being published in two parts and is being released on the joyous occasion of Birth Centenary Year of Sri Swami Venkatesanandaji Maharaj.

We sincerely hope that 'Inspiring Talks of Gurudev Sivananda' will prove a treasure worthy to be possessed and studied constantly by one and all.

-The Divine Life Society

A FOUNTAIN OF SIVANANDA YOGA

FROM SIVANANDA JNANA-GANGOTRI*

A day with Gurudev Sivananda is better spent than a year in the study of scriptures or a life-time in a library. A word-always appropriate to the occasion, and to the person addressed-a look, a smile, an action seemingly trivial-all these are (and only they truly are) 'Living Scriptures'. The inner truth which scriptures often hide from the gaze of the immature, the easy path to God-realisation which the complicated mind of the 'modern man' fails to see, the fountain of wisdom which the educated man's vision, blinded by the cataract of faithlessness, fails to perceive-are revealed like the apple on one's palm, by a simple word from the Sacred Lips.

For a period of just over two years, Gurudev had granted me the boon of gathering these pearls of wisdom, as they fell from his lips. Those were the years of hectic divine life activity at the Ashram too. They were the years during which the Ashram and the Divine Life Society had just emerged from their 'teething troubles' and the Mission began to take shape. Gurudev's pronouncements of this period, therefore, assume the importance of a divine gospel. With open eyes and ears and with the mouth shut,-Oh, it was a joy, a privilege, an unrivalled education to hear him, to hear more, and to hear nothing else. One who heard him, one who saw him, one who had spent an hour with him, would exclaim with Sage Alavandar-

Tava-amritasyandiniPada Pankaje,

Niveshitaatmaa Katham-anyadichchati;

Sthitheravinde Makarandanirbhare,

Madhuvrato Nekshurakam Hi Veekshate.

(How shall my mind, which has entered the sweet arbour of thy lotus feet, wish for anything else?)

I offer that undiluted nectar at the feet of my Gurudev, enshrined in the heart of millions of seekers after Truth, all over the world. I have in my own humble capacity endeavoured to give the reader a pen-picture of the setting: in order that he may live at Gurudev's feet' while reading these talks. Cold print misses something very vital-the gestures, etc., which often convey a lot. In such instances, I have taken the liberty of explaining a Talk. To those who have had his Darshan, this will call up the indelible picture of Ananda Kutir: if you have not yet had that good fortune, please have it now. Words cannot equal the Presence!

These inspiring talks have been recorded then and there, and published now as they were recorded, chronologically. They are not to be read as a textbook is read: but they are to be resorted to as a fountain-to quench the spiritual thirst. Any page and every page is laden with inspiration: and the usual 'contents' have been omitted in this volume, as it was felt that that would be confusing and cumbersome.

May Sri Gurudev live for ever and guide us along the path of divine life!

VENKATESANANDA

ॐ नमः शिवानन्दाय

Inspiring

TALKS

Of

Gurudev Sivananda

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।

तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।२ ।।

Note

IN THIS VOLUME "SIVA" REFERS TO

"SWAMI SIVANANDA"

MARCH, 1949

1st MARCH, 1949

COUNSEL OF HOPE AND COURAGE

Srimathi M. had written a pathetic letter, recounting the misfortunes that have visited her, her desperate condition and the causes that often tempt her to commit suicide. By the next post goes Siva's reply which, after entreating her to think, reflect, and face the trials of life with calm endurance, warns her against hasty surrender to emotion.

Do not commit any such unwise act You will gain nothing. This will lead to misery and suffering. Life is most precious. It is very difficult to get a human birth. Yield not to emotions. Be bold. Be cheerful. You can attain divinity in this birth and free yourself from birth and death through Japa and meditation. May God bless you!

MAHADEV DESAI'S SOUL BLESSED

Today is the All-Soul's Day at Sivanandanagar. The elaborate ceremonial observance is in progress, with consecrated food offerings, prayer on Ganges bank, Kirtan, etc. Siva sits on the cement seat opposite his Kutir, on the bank of the Ganges. He says:

'It was here that Mahadeva Desai and I were sitting in 1942. I offered him a chair: but he preferred to sit on a block of stone near the water's edge.' Then Siva did special Kirtan for the peace of Sri Desai's soul.

Was it that this noble soul (who was Mahatma Gandhiji's Private Secretary) yearned for the saint's blessings for his own onward

march to the Limitless Kingdom of God, and thus claimed Siva's remembrance on this auspicious day when he remembers the departed souls of all devotees?

The memory is within recall. The faithful Secretary to Mahatma Gandhiji arrived at the Ashram. He was nicely entertained by Siva, who also taught him some Yogic Kriyas and Pranayama. M. was greatly impressed by the multifarious activities of the Ashram: and he paid a glowing tribute to Siva and his mission in the 'Harijan'. Siva, for his part, was all admiration for a new Charkha which M. had brought with him and which he later presented to Siva.

MYSTIC PHILOSOPHER SEEKS SIVA'S HELP

Sri Dr. M.S., M.A., Ph.D., a mystic philosopher, writes to Siva:

'Indeed I very much appreciate your kindness and blessings to me.

'Revered Swamiji, I have tried to live seriously on the mystical path, but I don't find any friend in it. People's brains are so organised and their life impulses move so coarsely that they cannot appreciate the fine life and vibration. Hence, it is difficult for me to live in such a coarse surrounding. I find better company in silence and books and, in India today, ideal life in mystical pattern is very much missed. You have passed through such experience, and I, therefore, want to profit by them. I have mixed even freely with people who have entered into some spiritual order. But, alas! I have not got any help from them.'

The learned doctor's is a very understandable difficulty in the India of today. Let us now turn to Siva's reply:

Yes, that is the problem that faces most Sadhakas earnestly aspiring to achieve something in the spiritual path nowadays. The task is comparatively more difficult now than it would have been in the ideal circumstances in days of yore: perhaps it is that that adds to the glory of Sadhana now. Obstacles augment the Sadhaka's zeal, and put him on his guard at every step.

The problem, I find, is the same everywhere. Only, it assumes different forms in different places. Evil co-exists with good; and the Dwandwas are spread over the entire creation. However, the ideal surroundings exist within us: and we should strive our utmost to live in them.'

Thus the problem of the doctor of philosophy solved by the doctor of the soul-Siva. Siva has never indulged in polemics. He is a hundred percent practical Yogi-philosopher. Yet, it is a fact that many doctors of philosophy and doctors of literature count themselves among Siva's foremost admirers, devotees and disciples. Dr. Atreya went overseas on a lecture-tour: and he declared that it was only Siva's blessings and good wishes that sustained him, and inspired him to crown his tour with success. Many other doctors have paid glowing tributes to Siva's thrilling books, and to Siva's personality, too.

6th MARCH, 1949

ROADSIDE PARTY

Siva was walking up to the Bhajan Hall and Mandir for his evening stroll and circumambulations around the temple.

A shop-keeper (Bali) has shrewdly opened a sweetmeat-stall just on the road near the archway to the temple and the Siva Kutir, greeted Siva with an 'OM Namo Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj!'

'OM Namo Narayanaya. Are you all right? How is your business?' enquired Siva with all love.

'All your grace and blessings, Maharaj,' replied Bali touching Siva's feet.

'Swamiji, Bali has a feeling that Swamiji has not so far blessed his shop by partaking of his preparations.'

Is that so?' Siva looked around. For, he cannot take anything anywhere, unless there is a big crowd of people to share the feast with him. Some of us were emerging on the road. His voice rang out through space, and we all doubled up to him, and the Guru-loving Chidanandaji literally rolled down from up-hill though he had just then struggled up the hill, at the Guru calling out his name.

We all devoutly assembled outside the shop with our Lord in the centre. I had an indescribably strange vision in which I saw our Siva as the leader of a Parivrajaka party, all standing outside the shop ready to receive Bhiksha.'

Bali started distributing some sweets and some savoury.

The author of several books on health and hygiene, who would ordinarily insist on the laws of hygiene being observed rigidly, was partaking of this open-air feast when a fleet of lorries and buses whizzed past on this dusty Devaprayag Road, raising behind them a cloud of dust which surrounded us all and filled our lungs, too. The

edibles that we had in our hands were laid over with a thin layer of the dust we tread under foot.

The Sannyasin Siva had instantly swallowed up the doctor in him, or the Member of the Royal Institute of Sanitation (London) in him, and into Siva's stomach went sweets and dust with equal ease and freedom. The unconcerned look on Siva's countenance taught us: the sweets, the dust and the body (the physical sheath) all belong to the same category; only there is a difference in name and form.

The bill was paid: Bali was highly pleased: and the partakers of this holy feast were blessed with several silent sermons.

7th MARCH, 1949

SECRET OF SIVA'S VOICE

An old veteran exponent of Tiruppugazh, an immortal work of Saint Arunagirinathar of South India, gave a lecture at the Ashram. Age weighed the Tiruppugazh Swamiji's tone and pitch of the voice. Yet, Siva appreciated the Swami's zeal and enthusiasm in spreading the sacred knowledge. Siva asked several Sadhakas to get pepper, sugar-candy and hot water to help the Swami clear his throat. When the discourse came to a close, Siva himself took up the harmonium and began playing his own songs on Shanmukha and then sang Kirtans, too.

A visitor who could not find room for himself in the Hall where this function was held, and who had therefore to be content with receiving the impressions of the Kirtan and discourse through the ear alone, was later on curious to know which young man sang after the Tiruppugazh Swami.

'Swamiji, after the Tiruppugazh Swamiji's songs and discourse, the Kirtans that followed rang out in sharp contrast. It was melodious music.'

Chidanandaji burst forth in laughter. It was Swamiji himself!' he informed the visitor. Then C. himself explained; 'Swamiji has maintained the youth of his voice through Yogic practices such as Pranayama, through strict and regulated diet and through constant singing of Kirtan.'

8th MARCH, 1949

THE MEMORABLE EIGHTH

Indeed, the Eighth is a day which all of us, who follow Siva, look upon with veneration. As Janmashtami or the day of the birth of Lord Krishna is still celebrated as a great day, long after the disappearance from this earth-plane of that incarnation of God, so also 8th will ever be celebrated on earth by the devotees of divine life.

Year after year, earnest Sadhakas have been rejuvenated and revitalised on the 8th September: all parts of their being receiving rich food.

We thought that the animal nature in man was too strong to be curbed by an annual reminder of this great day: and so decided to celebrate it every month.

Such is Siva's play that the spiritual food too is now distributed every month. Eighth is indeed a memorable day.

A DIVINE TRIBUNAL

Early in the morning, the divine tribunal was constituted. Someone had a misunderstanding with another: a slight rub, a hitch, the distant rumblings of the clouds of discord. Siva patiently heard both sides. We awaited the verdict: but, it proved to be a most strange verdict, strange in the sense that no law court in the world has this simple method of seeing good in all-the accuser, the accused-and then striking at the root of the problem and eradicating the root there itself, instead of simply chopping off the branches.

TO THE ACCUSED

In the field of active work alone does man come face to face with his own inner contents. The inner nature is dormant while one is away from the battle-field. When the favourable opportunities offer themselves, then these inner hidden traits have a chance of manifesting themselves.

There must be some truth in what the other man says. This is the attitude that every Sadhaka must adopt. Then, sit, reflect, analyse your own self and find out that hidden trait he has pointed out.

'Some people's nature is sensitive. Their sensitivity is too high-strung: but we should not consider that a defect in them and prick it. We should mind what WE do. We should on our part understand and respect that sensitiveness.

'His sensitivity has felt that something you said was offending. At once, you should feel thankful to him. Thank the man who points out your defects. This is the basic virtue that every Sadhaka should cultivate and develop. Then only is there a chance for one's own improvement.

TO THE ACCUSER

If everyone aspires to be a Sadhaka, there will never be any complaint, rub or quarrel. A Sadhaka's attitude should always be to work selflessly, to aspire to be a good, perfect Sadhu. Then, there will be no need to revolt. God has given us all comforts. You have never felt the pinch of hunger: you have never suffered insecurity nor exposed yourselves to the mercy of nature. You have found a prosperous institution to care for you like a loving mother.

I have known what it is to run to a Kshetra to take Bhiksha. I have known what it is to sleep on the roadside. These should always be held before the mental eye of the Sadhaka. These are the principles of a Sadhu's life. We should compare our status with that of the Rishikesh-Sadhus. We are a thousand times more comfortable than they. We should be thankful to God for that. This complaining mentality should go.

TO BOTH

This incident reveals the fact that there is somewhere a disharmony of hearts. A quarrel arises only when there is this disharmony. Otherwise, the accuser refuses to accuse and the accused readily admits the accusation. Then there would be no need for law courts. All people should develop this one family spirit. Then quarrels will cease. There should be harmony of hearts. Your heart should beat in unison with all hearts: you should love all. Once there is rupture, it is very difficult to patch it up. But this is quite possible: what is required is continued, uniform and prolonged love-approach, so that the other party will have time enough to get over the grudge, then

the suspicion of your inner motives of love, and ultimately understand your true nature.

SWAMI CHIDANANDA

'All of you should treat Swami Chidanandaji as your Guru. Even I revere him as my own Guru. I have learnt countless lessons from him. I love him: I adore him. His knowledge is vast: his wisdom is truly inspired and intuitive. His good nature is unrivalled. His heart is very large and his kindness is unequalled. All of you should learn from him. Then only will you all improve, develop and evolve.'

WHAT IS NIRGUNA

The Rationing Officers of Dehra Dun and Rishikesh have come. They were cordially welcomed and at once entertained by Siva's children who had by now imbibed Siva's traits in these respects to a great extent. Sri Ayyannaji, Swami Chidanandaji, Sri Vishnuji-all were busy in the visitors' service.

They were all very intellectual people, students of philosophy, and Sadhakas, too.

One of them asked: 'Swamiji Maharaj, what is your idea about Nirguna Brahman? Does it mean only Shunya? In that case, it does not very much appeal to us. Who would like to meditate on nothingness?'

Nirguna, blessed devotees, is not nothingness. It is the fullness of everything that is good. Nirguna is plenitude. In it, you find all auspiciousness, all goodness, all beauty, all joy, all health, all sweetness, all purity, all peace,- everything developed to perfection.

From a distance, this fullness becomes inconceivable and so the sages called it Nirguna. Once they reach there, they get merged in that inexpressible experience. It is not nothingness: but it is everythingness, and beyond this, too: for it is inexpressible. Only know that all that exists in Maya or false perception, viz., evil, ugliness, misery, change, birth, death and decay, etc., are not in It. For, It is beyond Maya. In Nirguna, there are not the Gunas of Maya. Hence, It is called Nirguna.'

Oh Mahatmaji, we are grateful to you for this explanation. Indeed, you have convinced us that we should aspire to realise That. Please tell us what is Avyaktam.'

'Avyaktam, blessed children, is a term which is applied both to Brahman which is unmanifest, and also to Mula-Prakriti which is also unmanifest.'

'Why did, then, Swamiji, the Unmanifest become manifest?'

'That is a question which has never been answered. Many have tried to answer the question: but you will accept the answers only if you have faith. They have described this 'action' as the Swabhava or Lila of Brahman.

'The same question has assumed various forms: Why is there evil in the world? Why is the world there? Why has the Jiva been created? When did Karma originate? Why did Karma come into being at all? etc. Do not put the cart before the horse. Annihilate the sense of duality; go beyond the realm of Maya: you will know the answer to this transcendental question. You will not be able to express the answer: but you will know it: the problem would have dissolved.'

'Swamiji, you have given a most convincing answer to this unanswerable question. But, please tell us: do you think it is correct to say, in the case of Avataras like Sri Krishna, that the Absolute Nirguna assumed the Sakara, Saguna, aspect? If so, why?'

"That is simple to explain. The devotion of the devotee, the tears of a Bhakta's Prem, the cry of a devotee's heart, forces the Nirguna Brahman to assume the Saguna form. The form is there for the satisfaction of the devotee, to enable him to worship Him. In fact, it is the materialisation of the devotee's devotion.'

Another friend in the group began: 'Swamiji, with all the philosophical explanations at our disposal, we are still unable to reason out the inequality that exists in the world. One man is born as the son of a king: another, the son of a beggar. One man is born blind: another, a beautiful baby. Why did the Lord create this inequality?'

When Siva said: 'Ask the Lord Himself!' the entire gathering roared with laughter. What humorous wisdom! Ask the Lord: that is, first try to realise Him. Then the answer will be apparent.

Siva continued: "The Lord does not create inequality. He does not make a man suffer and another man enjoy. He is the silent witness of all this. Man himself is the cause of his own suffering. He reaps what he has sown in the previous births. The relentless working of the law of Karma (the Law of Cause and Effect) brings about pain and pleasure, misery and joy. Misery is only the purgation of past evil deeds. Mother nature punishes man in order that he might learn. She is not unkind either. Just think: would you accuse a mother who beats her own dear child to correct him and to mould his character?

Similarly, you ought to be thankful to mother nature for enabling you to work out your own Karma by suffering in this birth. At the same time, you should take care that you add no more to this load of Karma, by the awakening of the knowledge latent in you and by thus crossing over this ocean of Samsara.'

The officers were highly impressed by this lucid explanation of this difficult question. They bowed to Siva with great veneration and left, with his Prasad.

10th MARCH, 1949

SUCCESS OF DIVINE UNDERTAKINGS

Sri Bhakti Prem Swarup Brahmachari of the Bhagavan Shankar Annapurna Kshetra of Haldani approached Siva with a request to bless his scheme for providing amenities to pilgrims to Kailash-Manasarovar.

Siva wrote out his blessings in a special note-book which the Brahmachari had brought.

Then the blessings also materialised into a ten-rupee note, and Siva insisted that it should be accepted, in spite of the fact that the Brahmachari regarded the Ashirvad alone as worth a great treasure.

Then came what was perhaps of even greater value: a few, precious, invaluable instructions to the Karma Yogi-enthusiast:

'Maharaj, I shall say only two words in respect of the noble work you have undertaken. First: do not be an Arambha Soora. Once you have undertaken a good noble work, you should see it through till the completion. Some people encounter some difficulties, their zeal

and enthusiasm fades away in the middle and the work is neglected. You should not do that. Secondly, at no time should the self enter the work. The work should always be selfless. Here also generally people make mistakes: first they work selflessly and sometime later, they stray away into selfishness. These two points are very important. Further, even though you might have undertaken this scheme as a scheme of social service, you should, side by side, develop divine virtues such as Vairagya, Viveka and Shad Sampath and yearn to realise God through the service. You should convert all work into Karma Yoga. Then the undertaking will be really successful. OM Namo Narayanaya. Jai ho!'

11th MARCH, 1949

LIVE ALONE

'Chidanandaji, I have permitted Sri Ayyannaji to go to Badrinath this year. Last year itself, he had a great desire to do so: but he postponed it due to pressure of work here. He has worked very hard and he must have some change. Give him whatever money he needs for his expenses.'

'Yes, Swamiji.'

On 'Oh Ayyannaji, Shraddhanandaji may also be going to Badrinath. Would you like to go with him?'

'Yes, Swamiji, if I can be of service to him. Otherwise, I would like to go all alone."

You are right. You should always go alone. Otherwise, it is a great botheration. Even at some personal inconvenience, one should try to

live and move alone. I have had several experiences: and all of them go to show that a man should always remain alone. Even if Brahma Himself comes and says: 'I am Brahma, the Creator. I shall accompany you', you should say: 'Go your way: I shall go alone.' Not even this. Even if from your own heart, another Ayyanna comes out and offers to keep you company, you should decline it with thanks. Peace and bliss is only in living alone and moving alone.

You should all lead an independent life of seclusion and solitude. That is why I have built up all this organisation. I have known what it is to wander and to depend on other people for the bare necessities of life. I used to wander from place to place before coming to Rishikesh. I used to go to one house for the noon Bhiksha: and again I would not go to the same house. I used to feel 'What will the man think? Will he get disgusted with me? Will he think that I am a burden on him?' This sort of dependence on others will not do. You should live alone and independently. The organisation has provided you all with all the facilities necessary for that.'

SIVA'S GURU BHAKTI

Siva was making enquiries about the progress of the music class. We replied that we were carrying on.

You should all greet Sivaswarupji with folded palms and OM Namo Narayanaya. You should revere the Guru who teaches you the Vidya. Only then will the learning be fruitful.'

Yes, Swamiji. We are all doing that, though sometimes we forget to do so."

'No, no: you should never omit this. See, I had Swami Viswanandaji's company for only a few hours. Yet, I daily remember him in my Stotras in the morning. I include Swami Vishnudevanandaji's name also: as it was he who performed the Viraja Homa for me. It is very necessary: only then will the spark of Mumukshutwa burn brightly in us.'

SIVA'S TEACHERS

As usual, the topic drifted to lighter vein full of instructive humour.

'Once I learnt fencing from a Pariah. It lasted only for a few days. He was an untouchable: yet, I used to greet him with coconut and betel-leaves. Guru is Guru, to whichever caste or creed he belongs.

'In Malaya, there were several adept Tantriks. It was the time the Spanish Flu' took a heavy toll of lives in Malaya. I too had an attack: but somehow escaped. The Tantrik had several Mantras and Yantras. There was a wonderful Vidya. A special unguent is applied on the thumbnail of the adept who has done the requisite number of Malas of Japa of the Mantra: through this unguent the adept will be able to see and know about distant happenings. He can tell you what is going on in such and such a place in Mysore: or, what a particular person is doing, where he is and so on. I even now remember the Mantra.

Here, Siva actually repeated the Mantra. I had great reverence for the man who taught me the Mantra. I used to prostrate before him and entertain him nicely, serve him whenever the occasion arose. Later, I gave up the Tantrik practice as I did not like the idea of subjugating Devatas and getting things done through them.'

Therefore, when Siva warns the Sadhaka from pursuing the Tantrik Sadhana in its degenerated form which is prevalent widely nowadays, where the Sadhaka, through Mantra Siddhi, brings to his own selfish use precious psychic powers, it is not a sour grape philosophy, but it is a sincere advice of an adept. Misguided seekers would do well to listen to the warning and take to the Yoga of Synthesis which is both safe and sound.

SHALLOW VAIRAGYA

Sri Hem Kant's brother has come, with the intention of taking away Hem. They both came into the office.

'Do you wish to go?' Siva asked Hem.

'Yes, Swamiji: I might go for a few days and come back.'

Then you are at perfect liberty to take him. (To Hem.) If you wish to come back and remain here, you should make a thorough self-analysis and find out if your Vairagya is pucca. You should clearly understand the difficulties that you will have to encounter on the path. Renunciation is not a joke. Tomorrow, if you fall sick, and you find that you are not as fondly attended to here as you would have been in your own home, you should not regret having taken the step. You must be prepared to undergo any sort of suffering for the sake of God-realisation-the greatest good. So, consider deeply before finally making up your mind to stay here.'

They both had almost left the Hall, when Siva called the brother again.

TWO SONS FOR FAMILY: ONE SON FOR GOD

'What made you come all the way from Gauhati to Rishikesh?'

'Swamiji, our mother is greatly upset on account of Hem's absence. Everyone in the family is miserable. So, I was asked to fetch him back.

It is a good thing: because you have had a good Ganges bath which you might not have had otherwise. You have done some Japa on the Ganges bank. But, why should the parents be worried? Hem is not dead. He is alive, and very much so, because perhaps only now he is really alive. Do you call a worldly life of misery life at all? Here, he is leading a spiritual life, a blessed life devoted to God. Why should the parents be anxious? Has he committed any crime? On the other hand, they should all be happy that one of their sons has taken to the spiritual path. He is not the only son: he has two brothers. The progeny will be kept up by them. Why should he also procreate? Here, he will do something which no one has done: he will have Self-realisation. Is it inferior to studying in B.A. and later rotting in an office as a clerk? Tell the parents from me that if two sons remain in the family to look after the parents in their old age, and to keep up he progeny, at least one son should lead the path of renunciation and strive to attain God-realisation. You can also spend your life of retirement here, and so can your parents. What a great blessing it is!'

12th MARCH, 1949

AMSA AVATARAS

Dr. Brij Behari Lal's letter had not been attended to promptly. To Siva, that was an occasion for imparting a lesson to his children.

Even after such a long training, our inmates have to learn more the art of service. The organisation is growing daily. And, everyone should work like a bee, tirelessly and with zeal. Someone who has run away from the Ashram and fallen into evil ways, it seems, remarked that I did not teach him any philosophy. Why? What need is there for all of you to be taught. The very work, if you do it sincerely and with all your heart and soul, is enough: just see how I am working day and night. You will have to watch and learn for yourself. The talks and discourses that you listen to will not impress you so much as would an example.

'Service, service-that should always be your motto. The moment I get an address, see how I serve. Immediately I will enter it in my register. I will send a copy of the magazine, a packet of leaflets, a book, Prasad and a letter, too. Thus the Lord's name and the divine life message have been taken to another household. This should be your motto, too. You should eagerly wait for every opportunity of service. I have, every time, to extract work from you. Some of you have yet to feel that every work is your own, that the whole Society is your own, and that it is all His service.

'Avataras will come in special times of stress and strife. Perhaps, the birth of an Avatara is imminent. But, now, we should all take on the duties of an Avatara: in fact, all the saints of today are Amsa-Avataras, and we are all their helpers. We should ourselves feel that the divine spark is in us and work hard. Each one of you should do what an Avatar will do. Then the divine spark in you will burst forth into a conflagration.

'Can I not sit in a closed room and pursue the 'Who am I?' enquiry? But, the bliss that I get out of this service and untiring service of Sadhakas is, so to say, much greater than the bliss of meditation. The point is this: through this service, people are benefited. There is infinite expansion of the heart. What great service did Lord Krishna do? That should be your ideal. Serve, SERVE: feel that the divine spark (Amsa) is in you. Feel that you are preparing the ground for an Avatara to come.

I assure you: you will get Sadyo Mukthi if your body falls off while you are engaged in the service of humanity. If the body dies while you are carrying water to the temple, at the very moment you will attain Final Liberation. Fear not and serve.'

Blessed is today. For, after a lapse of about three years, I am again hearing such fiery words from the lips of Siva

Similar were the discourses that Siva used to give during October-November 1945 when the presence of a large number of visiting-Sadhakas created a perpetual Sadhana Week atmosphere in the Ashram. And, it was Siva's fiery advocacy of Karma Yoga that made a proud Dhyana Yogi of violent temper to carry water for the Ashram kitchen, a very high official of an Indian State, to remove cow-dung from the road.

13th MARCH, 1949

TO PLEASE ALL

A devotee brought a small packet. Only the wrapper and thread were visible from outside. The packet found its place on Siva's

table, as the devotee's head sought the sage's feet. Siva looked curiously at the packet.

'Swamiji, it is a humble devotee's token of reverence: a chaddar.'

'Silk chaddar?'

Yes, Swamiji,' replied the devotee at the same time opening the package.

Receiving the chaddar, Siva said: I am a Sannyasin. I should not wear silk. People will not like it. They will criticise Sannyasa itself."

'But, Swamiji, you cannot refuse my loving gift. Then you would have injured a loving devotee's heart.

This silenced Siva and he received the gift with the joy born of recognition of devotion.

The world! It takes all sorts of people to make the world. And, the Creator alone can know His creation. Thus, you always find yourself in a tight corner if you try to satisfy all. Which way to go? You stand bewildered. See how Siva solves the problem. Cast the lot in favour of the one who would be spiritually benefited by the action. The other party can be ignored-in this case it is the one who would purposelessly criticise the dress of a sage, being unable to understand even a little of the sage's inner nature.

18th MARCH. 1949

EVER BUSY IN COMMONWEAL

Mr. Relton of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, has come. Siva greeted him cordially and enquired about his health, etc., and if he had had his morning coffee. Yes, Swamiji: thanks very much."

Siva presented him with a few of his (Siva's) books. Thank you very much, Swamiji: I shall read them with the utmost interest."

'Is Henri van Zeyst at Adyar? Is he all right"?'

'Yes, Swamiji: he told me a lot about you and about your humanitarian activities here. He told me that you are ever busy....'

'What busy! It is all His work,' Siva said in all humility.

'Yes, Swamiji: those who are engaged in doing good to humanity are ever busy. It is really a marvel how much work you turn out. It is our prayer that God may grant you many, many years of health and strength for the service of humanity.'

SOMADEVA SARMA

Hardly had Mr Relton left the D.J. Hall, and hardly had Siva uttered the words: Today Sri Somadeva Sarma is coming?' then.... bd

'He has come, Swamiji,' Jyotirmayanandaji ushered in Sri Srivatsa Somadeva Sarma and party.

Siva at once got up from his seat and with folded palms greeted the great saint and savant, who is very well versed in the Vedas and the Puranas.

S. offered Sashtanga Namaskara to Siva.

The rarest good fortune to which I have been longing for such a long time, of your Pada Sevanam or your holy Darshanam, I have got

today. My eyes have today got the greatest feast. I am blessed, thrice blessed. Today is the greatest day of my life.' So on.....S. was literally in ecstatic joy at the sight of Siva.

A few of Siva's disciples ran hither and thither bringing coffee for the party, arranging for the rooms etc.

A CURE FOR LEUCODERMA

A young man, very seriously concerned about his own health, slipped into the office, along with his wife. Suffering physical or mental-tramples on etiquette or decency! Neither prostration nor patience-the man went right up to Siva's seat, and stood almost brushing his sleeves against Siva's arm.

'OM Namo Narayanaya!' greeted Siva, unmindful of his own conversation with Sri Somadeva Sarma.

The man placed his problem before Siva: 'Swamiji, I have got this...(pointing to a white patch on his neck). Please tell me what it is and how to get rid of it. I have consulted many doctors and each one says something: some doctor said it is...'

Seeing the young man hesitant, Siva volunteered Leucoderma?"

Yes, Swamiji: that is what one doctor said and I got greatly upset. It has brought on great mental agony."

'No, my child: you should not give way to emotions like that and get upset. It is after all loss of pigment."

'Still, Swamiji, it will disfigure me. Oh, I am greatly worried about it. Please do something for me, Swamiji.'

'Practise Sirsasana and Sarvangasana. Do Pranayama also. Use the prescription that I am giving you.'

Siva gave him a medical prescription also. And the young man prostrated before Siva, now greatly relieved, and left.

SIVANANDA AVATARAM

Only a sharp, subtle intellect with a pure understanding of Truth will be able to perceive Divinity. In spite of obvious supernatural birth and Lilas, Lord Sri Krishna was recognised as God Incarnate only by a few great souls.

Sri Somadeva Sarma, the profound scholar who could entertain learned audiences spell-bound with his eloquent and illuminating lectures on the Prasthanatraya, the Shastras and the Puranas, spoke during the evening Satsang. Here are a few salient points:

Whenever there is decay of righteousness and a seeming triumph of unrighteousness, the Lord Himself has assured us in the Gita that He incarnates on this earth and upholds Dharma. Again, He has said that anything that is divine and splendorous is His own Amsa. Our Lord Sivananda is surely an Avatara of Bhagavan. He has come to raise the fallen, to illumine the intellects of worldly-minded men and lead them all on the path of righteousness. Today, through Sivananda's grace and divine influence, thousands of Nasthikas (atheists) have been converted into Asthikas (theists); thousands of utterly beastly men and women have been divinised-and they all sing God's Name with great devotion. This I have seen with my own eyes. I have seen with my own eyes the impossible being achieved through the magic of Sivananda's name and influence. It is due to

him today that Dharma still holds its flag aloft. How many branches of the Society, carrying on what all divine activities! Truly, truly, Sivananda is an Avatara of Iswara Himself. His grace alone can guide South India, the land where today atheism is gaining strength, and lead that part of the land towards God.'

He sang several Sanskrit stanzas composed by him in praise of Siva and said: 'In all our gatherings we start with

these stanzas in order to invoke the blessings of our Guru and God, Swami Sivananda on our undertaking."

Oh Siva! Such is thy glory. Who can comprehend it truly?

25th MARCH, 1949

ADVAITA SIDDHI

What is the difference between a man and a saint? I eat: he eats. I sleep: he sleeps. I wear clothes: so does he. I suffer from diseases: so, I see, does he.

But, I now understand that what I see apparently is wrong. For, when you and I suffer from a disease, we suffer: but, when a saint suffers from one, he does not actually suffer, but passes through it. Disease, as it were, is an ornament to him, or a natural state of health, a common thing as answering calls of nature.

Siva has scabies. The percentage of sugar in the urine is high: the frequent injection of insulin brought on its own reaction, scabies. For this, he used sulphur ointment, etc.: this had its reaction in fever. This chain of action-reaction would have been sufficient to make us fret and fume, swear and be scared,

Not a day did he miss at the office. Now, I think, I should bring my ointment and brush daily to the office, as I bring my fountain pen and spectacles.' Siva remarked one day. How lightly he treats it!

Siva has temperature today. Yet, he is there in the office. A young man came into the office and wanted to learn Pranayama. I would have given him a bit of my mind and turned him out: for, I would have expected the visitor to notice that when I had a blanket on in summer, it was an indication that I was not well and so, should not be bothered. But, not so our Siva: he began to demonstrate to the visitor the various easy comfortable Pranayamas.

And, if a man writes the following poem in that state of health, do you call him man?

O Lord! Thou art the scabies.

Thou art the parasite acari scabii

That produces scabies or itching.

Thou art the doctor who treats patients.

Thou art the medicine Ascabiol (M & B),

Sulphur ointment, talc and cuticura powder,

Neem oil, neem soap and the paste or lepan

Made up of gerua, sandal and rose-water.

It is a great mystery, Oh Lord!

nell Thou art hiding in all these forms

And playing the game of 'hide and seek'.

I have realised this great mystery.

I behold Thee in all these forms.

Glory unto Thee, O Adorable Lord!

Prostrations and adorations unto Thee,

Oh Secret of secrets!

PHILOSOPHY IN HUMOUR

In the evening, some of us were working with a petromax lantern in the office. Siva stepped in, on his way to the Bhajan Hall.

'Come: try this.' He invited each one of us in turn to a packet of 'Sev' (a savoury prepared in his own Kutir). Then he asked for the opinion of each one of us on the taste of the stuff.

'Somehow, the bazar Sev appears to taste better,' said Siva, and asked Vishnu ji to get a little of the bazar stuff. Now, taste both and tell me the difference."

Each one said something. One liked a little chillie added to the Sev: another said it was not good, and so on.

Siva summed up: Tastes differ."

What profound truth!

And so the consumption of Sev went on. 'Can anyone tell me what exactly is the taste of the Sev?' Siva posed a question. We merely looked at each other in bewilderment.

Siva himself solved the difficulty: I think it is quite impossible to make you understand how I feel about it. To each one of us, the

taste is essentially different. Each one's experience of the taste is different. You alone can know it: you experience it: you cannot express it. Such is the Atman, too. Therefore, realise It yourself."

APRIL, 1949

1st APRIL, 1949

THE VIEW OF THE WORLD

A few visitors from Madras had, during their stay at the Ashram, accidentally chanced to come face to face with a young man who had renounced his family and come away to Uttarakhand for practising Tapasya.

When Siva was told of this identification, he fondly enquired about the status of the family, to reassure himself that the young man's disappearance would not starve the members of his family.

'Swamiji, his father-in-law is a fairly rich man, so is his own father. It is about a year and a half since he left the house: so, perhaps even the anxiety that they felt about him and the sense of privation would have by now cooled down.'

'But, the wife wants her husband! That is the trouble. She is not satisfied with money, parents and children. The woman is always after a husband,' remarked Siva, in Shavian jest, full of hidden wisdom.

RENUNCIATION NEEDS STRENGTH

'Swamiji, may we inform the parents and parents-in-law that he is here? Perhaps, they will be relieved of their anxiety.'

'Oh yes, why not? And, even if they come here and start crying over his sleeves, it does not seriously matter. If he has the inner strength of conviction, then he will stay in spite of everything. He appears to

be full of spiritual Samskaras: else his Vairagya would have faded away long ago and he would have returned to the house. Mind, he has led a very rigorous life, and undergone a good deal of suffering during the last one and a half years. Still he is adamant in his resolve. Renunciation is not an easy thing. It comes only out of strong Purva Samskaras.'

SWEPT OFF BY A TYPHOON

'Swamiji, he used to read a lot of your works. In fact, we are sure that it is only because of that he left the world so suddenly, and in the face of the attraction of a young wife and child.'

Yes, yes: I also asked him: If you were inclined spiritually, then why did you marry?' He said 'It was only after the marriage, I started reading your books.' Such is the Lord's will. Who can alter that?'

Your books, Swamiji Maharaj, are like the winds of a typhoon: they sweep men off their feet, only to plant them firmly on the spiritual path.' After a pause, the visitor added: 1, too, read your books, Swamiji....'

His wife who was also in the group, interrupted, ... and, Swamiji, we have been anxiously watching him, lest he, too, should renounce the world and run away.'

'But, Swamiji, I have never felt such an inclination....' Siva interrupted: 'Only when there is a spark can it be ignited!'

But the visitor was engrossed in his own line of thought. 'Swamiji, I have always felt that it is possible to realise God through

Grihasthasrama also. I do not feel that the family life is in any way an obstacle to spirituality.'

'Yes. yes: it is possible to realise God in and through the world. You have to live like a lotus-leaf on water.'

WHAT IS WORLD?

A railway engineer came in. He had a doubt to be cleared.

bad 'Swamiji, You say we should avoid a worldly man's company. But, Swamiji, aren't we all worldly men? If I, too, am a worldly man, what do I get by labelling another as a worldly man and avoiding his company? I think this is possible only when I renounce the world and come here.'

'What is here? Is this not the world? Is Rishikesh not part of the world? How can you renounce the world? Where will you go?' These questions put the engineer in a very receptive and reflective mood. 'What is meant,' continued Siva: 'by a worldly man is a man who is full of worldly nature. A man may live in the world, and yet be not of it. That is the secret. Never allow the evils of the world to get into your heart: enthrone God in the heart.'

FROM MECHANICAL REPETITION TO BHAVA

I do try to meditate on the Lord in the heart and to do Japa. I find it very difficult. My mind always wanders. It has no taste for Japa.'

Jou Go on mechanically repeating the name as a parrot does. In course of time, the Mantra-Shakti will awaken in your heart a real love for the Lord and His Name, the real Bhavana which will lead you to Bhava Samadhi. Persistent effort is necessary."

6th APRIL, 1949

PUNCTUALITY: SIVA'S DEFINITION

'Where is Chidanandaswamiji? Where is Siva- narayanji?.....' Siva was there on the Ganges bank: and the boys ran here and there collecting the Ashram-group that would accompany Siva across to the Swarg Ashram.

Judge Saheb with a party of Swarg Ashram Sadhus had arrived at 7 a.m. to take Siva to Swarg Ashram. The party came singing 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya-Jaya Ram' Kirtan.

At 7.30 Siva arrived at Sri Viswanath Ghat, ready to make a move. Within the fraction of a second, he had checked up on all the things that had to be taken-fruits, money, books, magazines, pamphlets, etc. One or two of the Ashramites scheduled to accompany him, were yet to come.

'Swamiji, we had been told to be ready at 8 a.m.'

That might be: but it is our duty to be well prepared half an hour ahead. That is punctuality. Then we would also avoid running about hither and thither at the last moment. Well, now let us go.

For, then Acharyaji had also come.

And, the boat sailed along, merrily, to the accompaniment of the Kirtan.

UTSAV BHAVAN

We assembled on the open ground near the Swarg Ashram office. After the usual speeches, Sri Upadhyayaji requested Siva to open

the new Utsav Bhavan, designed especially to house a small altar of God before which would go on Bhagavat Katha, etc. Raghavacharyaji, the aged Shad-Darshanacharya, concurred, and said: 'In my view, among those present today, Sri Swamiji Maharaj is the foremost, a saint and seer, full of the divinity whose birth we have today assembled to celebrate. I am very happy when, soon after I went over to the other bank of the Ganga, to the Muni-ki-reti, Swamiji also went there and established his Ashram where he preached Rama-Bhakti and Nama-Bhakti, from where arose mighty waves of devotion to the Lord that uplifted humanity. Indeed, he is a great Mahatma whose blessings should be sought by all of us.'

Siva stood beside the door of the Utsav Bhavan, and roared OM OM OM.-Om is the seed of all auspiciousness and Siva never commences any function without it. Then his usual Kirtans ending up with the Maha Mantra Kirtan which has received a new life from Siva.

After a short speech wherein Siva eulogised the wonderful service that the founder of the Swarg Ashram had rendered to humanity, and with his own blessings May this Utsav Bhavan be a haven of peace and godliness to which all devotees could resort, purify themselves, and become Jivanmuktas!' he declared the Utsav Bhavan open.

FILLED FOR AGES TO COME

When all had seated themselves within this Utsav Bhavan, Siva sang a few most inspiring Kirtan Dhwanis.....and the voice! Coming as it does from the very navel of this great Yogi, it rang out in sweet melody and indescribable power and filled the entire atmosphere.

Siva's single voice reached farther than that of the entire gathering combined. These powerful vibrations would last for ages.

And, our cup of bliss was filled. At the conclusion of the function, Siva himself stood up and distributed the Prasad with his own divine hands....he went round here and there taking the utmost care to see that none, not even the meanest and the most neglected members, not even the slumbering child on his mother's lap, none was omitted.

TWO DISTINCT THINGS: KNOWING AND DOING

And, so, the function came to a close and we left the Utsav Bhavan. There was rush again...this time it was to touch Siva's feet. This procession of men and women lasted for quite a few minutes, and others ran after Siva and took the dust of his feet.

You have made it a great success. All the glory for today's grand function belongs to you,' Siva said to Upadhyayaji.

'No, Swamiji. It was all your grace only. Mahantji also had this idea. I got this idea also several years ago. It was through your grace only that it was fulfilled this year.'

'It is one thing to have an idea and quite another thing to take the initiative to do it. It is one thing to know: quite another thing to do. We know so many things: but hardly do we dare to do them. The credit for taking this initiative should definitely go to you. May God bless you all!"

Upadhyayaji would not take this hint. He insisted on accompanying Siva till the very bank of the Ganges. You 1 hope,' said Siva: 'that this is only a beginning: in future, you should arrange to celebrate

all the festivals here. People will be benefited: Sadhus will be benefited: and it will bring glory to the institution, too."

By your grace and blessings, Swamiji, I hope it will be so.'

7th APRIL, 1949

'Have those blocks gone to Sankaranandaji?' queried Siva, as he came into the office.

'Sankaranandaji? But, I have sent them to Narayanaswamiji!'

Siva told one inmate who passed this instruction on to another, and it went to yet another...losing itself in transit....Result: confusion and a thing intended for someone goes into some other's hand.

'All right. Please write to Narayanaswamiji to send the blocks to Sankaranandaji.'

After a while, Siva remarked: 'If I do not pursue every matter like this till its very tail-end, at once I find that things have gone wrong."

Siva, who has been working at this strain for more than quarter of a century (why, even in Malaya he was famous for this thorough-going work), has to do it even today and the youngsters feel that the moment they pass the baby on to another, their responsibility is over. And, Siva never tires of service.

SHUBHASYA SHEEGHRAM

When you know a thing to be good, do it at once. This is Siva's advice to all. Who knows what tomorrow will be like? And, man's mind is so fickle and flippant that ere the day breaks again, it has its

own revisions of ideas, and relapses into its old grooves. Even in regard to ordinary matters of detail, Siva adopts this motto.

The service in the temple in connection with Sri Ramanavami was over: it was past midday. The Prasad that had been distributed at the temple had kindled people's appetite, and everyone was straining his ears to hear the kitchen bell.

'Vishnuswamiji, bring ten-rupee worth of Pedas. We shall perform the opening ceremony of the two new Kutirs immediately.' And, Vishnuji ran.

Jnaneshwari Kutir built by Judge Saheb: and then Sri Gajanan Sharma's Kutir. Each took nearly fifteen minutes. And, the thrilling Kirtan Dhwanis and the very presence of Siva in our midst took away the weariness: and only the kitchen bell reminded that we had a stomach to feed.

STAY HERE

At night, we were all at the desk. Siva came into our midst on his way back to his Kutir from the Bhajan Hall. Viswanathan caught his eye.

'What about Viswanathji? Have you decided to stay on here? Is there any attraction still for the family? What will your father say?'

'Swamiji, my father actually turned me out of the house when he found that I was getting into trouble on account of my association with a political party. He will not bother about it if I stay here or elsewhere.'

Then, it is shameful to return to such a father! Stay here.'

Then, without even a word from V., Siva had chanted OM thrice and continued his Jaya Ganesh Kirtan.

'But, Swamiji, I might be permitted to go for a few months, for I have promised my friends that I will see them again.'

"What friends? Let them come here if they are so eager to see you.'

Here is a real test of friendship. Most of our worldly friends are not as friendly, not even a hundredth as friendly as we believe them to be. It is only our ignorance that creates this bond. When this friendship is put to the test, we find that this bond had never been there at all. How many disillusionments of this type does the average man get: and yet this Moha for friends never leaves him, and he is ever eager to make new friends and newer friends, forgetting every time that his older friends have become aliens to him already!

V. agreed to stay on.

11th APRIL, 1949

NOTHING FOR THE ATMAN

'What are the Governors and Chief Ministers doing?' asked Siva, in the course of a conversation this morning. They all come and do some Seva in the temple: some should do Kirtan in the Bhajan Hall: others should carry water for the kitchen. Merely sitting at their desk in the office and signing papers will not do. At the end of it all, they will find that they have done nothing to realise their own Self.'

How true! 'People who engage themselves in social service or in the service of the nation, even though with a laudable motive in the

beginning, soon lose sight of the goal and stray away into selfishness and self-aggrandisement. As they approach the end of their life, they are filled with an inward bitterness (and, this too, only if they have at some time or other had a spiritual inclination) at not having achieved substantial inner progress.

Throughout the active career of these people, they are filled with the wrong notion that they are indispensable to the state or nation or society. But the Lord of Death has no such illusion: He snatches them away in the twinkling of an eye. What is the wonder of wonders-the world goes on, the nation lives, and society thrives in their absence, too. The world neither gains nor loses anything. These people were Maya's tools: if they had discarded her charms and worked selflessly for the good of humanity, at the same time plunging within their own Self and brought out the pearl of Atma-Jnana, Maya would have lost one of her victims, and the world to which they would have handed over this pearl of wisdom would be definitely the better and richer for it.'

14th APRIL, 1949

H. A. Y.? P. R.

Do you know what this means? Think. For thinking is good for the brain.

As they do with conundrums, I will give you some details about these letters. They form part of an autograph- blessings that appear on the cover of a book that Siva is sending a devotee as a present. And, this devotee has for a considerable time not been writing to

Siva. Now, think again. For, deeper thinking along a particular line helps cultivation of the powers of concentration.

The interrogation mark reveals it: 'How are you? Please reply.'

You might ask: How does Swamiji expect the devotee to know this? If he is not sure that the devotee would easily understand it, then what use is it writing this much?"

This is the strangest phenomenon. If the reader understands, then the purpose is served. If he is unable to understand it, then also the purpose is served.

The purpose is served the moment these letters are penned by Siva.

How? If he understands, he will reply. If he does not, then he will write to ask what it is: and naturally he will write all that Siva wants him to write!

In the process of thinking about this conundrum, already the blessed devotee has gained a lot. He has passed through his mind all the days that he was with Siva, the Upadesha that Siva had given him (lest it should refer to something of that Upadasha, that he has neglected), everything, everything indeed, from the date he met Siva till the date of the receipt of the book with these few letters inscribed on it. Thought deepens into concentration: and this, when coupled with Vichara, is productive of the most salutary results. He is sure to be revived-spiritually,

MESSAGE TO THE GUARDIANS OF YOUTH

Sri K. Raman Nair, Headmaster of Shoranur High School, has come and before leaving the place, had collected a number of Siva's

books. His wife made a quick survey of the entire book-shelf, the photographs and lockets and selected many of them: The children will like it.'

Siva came in. Raman Nair explained to him that he was on a mission of gathering information from authoritative sources about any improvement that he may carry out in the management of the school.

Much of what the boy learns in the school today, he has to forget later on: very little of it is actually useful to him. The main thing-a spiritual training is sadly neglected. Ethics ought to be the very foundation of the boys' career at school. At the schooling age, the boy is easily pliable. You should try to plant in his fertile mind good seeds of spirituality, morality and ethical perfection. Then only will the school serve its purpose. Start the school with a prayer in the morning. Encourage the students to study spiritual books of a non-sectarian nature. Gita should be taught. Yoga Asanas and Suryanamaskara should be introduced.'

'Swamiji, I have already selected your pictures, and am taking them with me. Yoga Asana Chart and Suryanamaskara - I shall certainly train my students in these. I am also taking some of your books. I shall encourage my students to study and digest your precious words contained in them.'

'And, start a magazine also. Ask the teachers and students, too, to contribute articles to it. This will help you a great deal. Convert your school into a college gradually. You have a wonderful philanthropic spirit. You can do wonders.'

'It is all possible only through your grace, Swamiji.'

MORE KUTIRS

Nowadays frequent enquiries are received here for estimates for the construction of Kutirs. Retired people are anxious to have the Satsang of Siva and of spending their retired life in the service of the great master.

'Say 'Yes' to this letter.' Siva gave a fresh enquiry whether a Kutir could be constructed at the Ashram.

Then, Siva added: 'We do not know how it will develop in future. Perhaps it will one day turn out into a Sanatorium. But, anyway, all these retired people will be of great help to the institution, too: and, they will keep the work going. It is all God's will and no one knows, in what mysterious ways help will come.'

16th APRIL, 1949

THE GREATEST SERMON

Sadhana Week is in progress. Siva quietly joined the morning meditation class. When meditation was over, he stood up. He began to sing:

Sarvam Brdhmamayam re re Sarvam Brahmamayam

This is the last word of wisdom in the Upanishads. It is the cream of the Vedas. This one formula contains all that you need. Meditate on this one formula. You will attain Kaivalya Moksha.

'Sarvam Brahmamayam: all hatred, dislike, diversity, fear and other evils will vanish. You will see Brahman and Brahman alone

everywhere. Names and forms will vanish. You will enjoy supreme peace.

'Meditation on the four Mahavakyas bestows on you the fruits of studying the four Vedas. But, meditation on this one great utterance of the Seers is equal to meditation on all the four Mahavakyas at one stroke. Therefore, repeat: Sarvam Brahmamayam.

Negate the illusory names and forms. Kill this little i Hate none. Dislike No one. Sing now: Sarvam Brahmamayam.

'Ghrina will vanish. You will never dislike anything-no, not even evil. In the Devi Sukta, Devi is worshipped at

Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu Bhranti Rupena Samsthitaa

Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu Trishna Rupena Samsthitaa

The Devi who is Shakti, mother, Santi, etc., is Trishna and Bhranti, too. Good and evil are both Her forms only. The Lord says in the Gita: 'Dyutham Chhalayatam Asmi'. He is described in the Rudram: Taskaranam Pathaye'. These clearly prove that hidden in all these forms, it is He and He alone that shines. Negate the outer covering and sing- Sarvam Brahmamayam.

'In whatever condition you are, even though you have been starving for days together, even if you are on the roll of unemployment, even though you have lost everything in Pakistan, sing: Sarvam Brahmamayam. You will feel an inexpressible joy pervading your entire being. All the wealth of the world will perish. But the bliss that flows from the meditation on this Mahavakya is imperishable. It will revitalise you. It will give you peace and bliss. Live for ever in

the spirit of this one formula. You will soon become a Jivanmukta. May God bless you all!'

Then he made all people repeat in chorus:

Jaya Jaya Radhe Govind

and

Sita Ram Ram Ram

before the assemblage dispersed.

DR. BRIJ BEHARI LAL

Dr. Brij Behari Lal of Saharanpur spoke on practical Sadhana and pointed out methods of practically living the divine life. Siva, at the conclusion of the doctor's speech, eulogised the doctor's humanitarian services at Saharanpur.

Dr. Brij Behari Lal's lecture was full of words of wisdom. He has shown you how to live the divine life every day. His practical instructions are worth following. He is a very learned man: yet he has chosen to dwell on the practical side of religion than on the philosophical.

The same Atman is in all. Therefore, you should, day by day, develop equal vision. You should give up the practice of reserving the best of everything for yourself and giving away the stale plantain to the servants. You should feel that your own Self is in the servant, too. You should feed the servants first, give the best fruits to them, and if need be, forego your own share. Then only will your heart expand. After a few days, this zeal will fade away. You will relapse

into the old habits. You will once again have to raise up the Bhavana. And, gradually, this trait will strike a deep root in you. Your heart will expand and you will realise the Self.'

SANNYASA CALLS YOU

The Sannyasa Flag was worshipped. Siva, in the course of a brilliant oration explaining the significance of the Sannyasa Flag, said:

The flag flutters in the air: it calls you all-come, embrace Sannyasa. One day or the other, you have to embrace Sannyasa. The Upanishads declare: 'Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaikena-amritatwamanashuh Nothing except renunciation can give you Moksha. If not now, at a later stage: if not in this life, in a life to come-before you attain the Supreme, you will have to embrace Sannyasa.

'Some people say: 'Why give Sannyas to young people?' Why? They are the fittest for Sannyasa. Only young people can practise intense Sadhana and Tapasya. What can an old man do? Just when he is about to die, someone will utter the Mahavakya in his ears which had already ceased to hear. Of what use is such Sannyasa? Glory to the youthful Sannyasins who have dared to defy the worldly temptations and embrace the Holy Order!

'Even you, ladies, ought to take Sannyasa. There have been astounding examples in the Upanishads and Yoga Vasishta of ladies who possessed Brahma Jnana. You are by nature nearer to God. You are loving by nature. You have many divine virtues. Only, you are more attached to children. That is your only weakness. If you try even a little bit, you can achieve the Supreme.

'May you all realise the Self in this very birth!"

TEHRI'S CHIEF MINISTER

Sri Jyoti Prasadji, Chief Minister of Tehri-Garhwal State, was coming towards the Ashram. We received him and took him to Siva's Kutir where the party was entertained by Siva himself.

'Swamiji, I have received the packet of books that you have so kindly sent me. How wonderfully you write! Every word of what you say is only too true and uttered in your own direct style: and one is at once inspired by them, as they emanate from the very heart of a Self-realised saint.

I have studied the books of all great men: but have not been able to find that particular charm in anyone else's."

It is all God's Grace."

17th APRIL, 1949

THE DEVOTEE'S ATTITUDE

Sri Sudarshan was in a complaining mood. The Sadhana Week did not satisfy her entirely: for she heard more of talks and discourses than of Kirtan and Bhajan. She is good at composing songs. She has composed many songs on Siva himself. Quickly, in the afternoon, she had composed her song of complaint. 'O Sadhakas, please ask Swamiji why he has not chosen to sing his lovely Kirtan Dhwanis.'

Siva stood up on the platform after the Drama at night was over. Sudarshan asked for this Kirtan or that song.

'Ohji, all these are stale now,' said Siva. Look at the simplicity that enables him to say this from the lecture platform, facing a huge audience.

'No, Swamiji, to us they can never become stale.'

'All right, then,' said Siva. Then gushed forth Siva's favourite songs, one by one, and Sudarshan was visibly moved by Siva's grace and mercy.

Siva sang 'Song of Ities' and explained the meaning. Siva sent the audience to the heaven of joy, when, in the middle of the song, he stopped and said in the same tune: I have forgotten the rest of the song.' and translated this into all the languages. A little while later, he recollected the entire song and continued to sing.

Try it once in your life and feel for yourself what a tremendous lot of courage and straightforwardness is necessary to do all this. It is impossible to evaluate this except through one's own experience. Fear of brickbats, fear of loss of name, fear of public criticism, and a host of other fears simply eat into the vitals of the man who finds himself in such a predicament. Dwiteeyaat vai Bhayam Bhavati'- Only perception of duality creates fear. Where is fear, of any sort, to one who has passed beyond this sense of duality? Siva sees his own Self in all-he has realised the Unity of Self-and therefore there is no fear for him, but bliss alone.

Next he turned to the song:

Chidananda Chidananda Chidananda hum

Har Halme Almast Satchidananda hum.

I am Knowledge and Bliss, in all conditions I am Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

This is the greatest tonic in the world, said Siva. In whatever condition you may find yourself, sing this song and realise its power to revitalise you, to rejuvenate you. You need not resort to drugs and tonics if you know this song. You will save doctor's bills if you sing this song."

Next came the 'Song of Govinda':

Goal of life Govinda

Is God-realisation Govinda

Attain this Govinda

Through Japa Kirtan Govinda

Through Mantra writing Govinda

Quickly Siva turned to Sudarshan and asked: You have heard this many times. You are fond of this song also. But, have you ever thought of doing what I am telling you now? You never write the Mantra.'

'From today I will do, Swamiji.'

'And, send me the Mantra note-books regularly.'

And, he continued the song.

Siva was not feeling quite well physically. Yet, he continued the programme till 1 a.m. Thus had he demonstrated the efficacy of

'Chidananda' song. At 12.30 he was in a spirited mood. He sang sectional songs. A Punjabi tune-

Ladagai Ladagai Ladagai Ho

Akhiyan Ladagai Shyam Sundar se

His own Tamil composition followed: and then a Telugu poem. After this, the two party Kirtan. The novelty this time was that he set man against woman. Ladies would say:

Radha Radha Shyam Bolo

and men said:

Sita Sita Ram bolo.

Now, it was Siva's turn to get dissatisfied. 'No, no: this is no good. There is no life in that corner. All big officers! Shy to do Kirtan! Now, sing again. Let me see who wins-ladies or gentlemen.'

This infused a new spirit in all. The sky was rent with the Lord's names.

That is fine. The ladies have won. They have got all natural godly tendencies. They deserve to win. They are nearer God. Their nature is loving. They are fit for Bhakti Marga. They can realise God through Bhakti, even more quickly than men can do. Only, they are attached to children.'

21st APRIL, 1949

PARADISE THROWN AWAY

On the 28th February 1949, Siva wrote a poem warning earnest Sadhakas from falling into the hands of pseudo-Gurus who misguide their followers.

Today, we have a practical example of what effect such contacts have on the Sadhaka.

L.L. Bhirud, a very earnest student of Yoga, one who has received much valuable help from Siva's teachings and thus had progressed satisfactorily along the path of divine life, writes:

'Received your kind gift of two books. I also got your loving letter. I am really very happy to note your enthusiasm in helping me. Today I want to write about the changes in me during the last few months.

After coming to Poona, I began to study...I first went carefully through....which deals with Sadhana Chatushtaya. This book captured me at that time. But now I am studying Sri....'s lectures. They appealed to me much. Now I do not find any need of belief or Guru. I do not at all like Japa. I do not at all think it necessary to follow the commands of the masters, etc. simply because they are great. I have nothing to do with God. I never think about God. There is no need to think about Him. I want to follow the dictates of my own conscience. This is a very simple and direct way of approaching the so-called Reality. I shall consult others, authorities, but not accept their views unless I find truth in them. This, I think, is a great change in me. To put into classical words, I am following Jnana Yoga. I hope you will still love me 'as I am'.

Certainly, there is a great change.....but is it for your good or otherwise?

What was Siva's reaction on reading this letter? He smiled and said: 'Here is a clearer warning of what I said days ago. Here is a case to prove what I said. This is how innocent, diligent Sadhakas are lured away from the right path by miscreants who unsettle the Sadhaka's belief and leave him in the lurch. Never, never listen to them. Never even approach the room in which their books are kept. The association of these preachers is as beneficial to the Sadhaka as is the association of an evil-minded dancing girl to a wealthy zamindar. As the dancing-girl will drain the zamindar of his resources and then leave him in the lurch, so also these preachers will drain the Sadhakas of all the spiritual wealth they possess and then leave them in a very pitiable condition, where the Sadhakas will find that they have burnt their boats in midstream. Beware!'

23rd APRIL, 1949

MAHANTS! PLEASE NOTE

The Rawal Saheb of Badrinath temple has come from Malabar, on his way to Badrinath. Along with him came a Swami from Kalikamliwala Kshetra. After exchange of greetings, the Rawal Saheb settled down on a chair in front of Siva. But, this Kshetra Swami was greatly embarrassed when Siva asked him to sit on the bench.

'No, Maharaj, I shall keep standing.' Above all, these people who have lived in Rishikesh for the past twenty-five years not only know Siva to be great, but have realised that he is great-they have seen him in rags, they have seen him as a stern Sadhu, they have seen him as a walking Gita, they have seen him as a great Yogi, and now they see him as The Great.

And, the Swami continued: 'Maharaj, this year I shall be going to Badrinath to be in charge of the Kshetra's free kitchen there. I require Swamiji's blessings.' Palms folded in front, eyes closed and the head swayed in front.

'Ohji, you are a very noble soul: that is why God has given you this opportunity. May God bless you! I will tell you one thing. Serve the Sadhus and Mahatmas there with Prema-Bhava. Do not run hither and thither, doing Dandavat Pranams to rich people, and entertaining them on Persian carpets, and then scolding and ill-treating Sadhus. Serve the Sadhus and God Himself will shower gold into your Khajana. You will attain Moksha Samrajya by this one service. May God bless you! OM Namo Narayanaya.'

Precious instructions are these to all those, to whom God has entrusted spiritual organisations.

BE SELF-DISCIPLINED

It takes all sorts of people to make an Ashram: and Sivanandashram is noted for its catholicity of faith so that anyone professing any religion, creed or Yoga can become its inmate. And, there are some orthodox Vairagis who would prefer to take Bhiksha from the Kitchen and eat it on the Ganges bank. VVV was one of them. The kitchen manager had felt it rather inconvenient to serve these people with Bhiksha and to serve the others at the same time.

Siva called VVV and said: 'In whatever you do, you should try not to cause the least of trouble to others. Well, if you wish to take Bhiksha and eat it on the Ganges bank, do so by all means. It is good. And, it would not be very difficult for the kitchen people to

arrange it. But, you should have patience and discipline. You should wait for your turn. Never ask for extra-considerate treatment. Obey the rules. It will help you in your evolution.

Even God follows certain rules self-imposed. Think of the universal laws-how nicely they operate. Think of the correlation of planets and with what rhythm and precision they move. Cannot God also leave the world go and do Tapas in Uttarkashi? He has His eye on every atom of creation and attends to everyone's needs. He has to keep an account of everyone's Karmas and mete out the rewards and punishments in strict accordance with the Eternal Laws. You should acquire that much of self-discipline if you wish to evolve into God.'

And, I have heard that even in his Swarg Ashram days, when the Ashram authorities were ever eager to serve him in all possible ways, Siva would insist on being one among the crowd and decline to make use of the privileges granted to him. He would stand in the long queue, in the hot sun, waiting for his turn to take Bhiksha. He could as well have taken it at any moment 'side-ways': but he would never break the discipline of Swarg Ashram.

And, still they come.

25th APRIL, 1949

JUDITH TYBERG

From far off America, a sincere seeker after Truth intent on finding out the Reality in and through the maze of sects, creeds and schools of thought in India-Srimathi Judith Tyberg has come to Ananda Kutir.

She has great ideas. She was one of the founders of the World University Round table of America, of whose Religious Section, Siva is the head. She intends to go back to America and spread Hindu Yoga.

After the evening Satsang, Siva asked her to speak a few words, if she would like to do so.

'Me, Swamiji? I came to learn, to listen and to be with you and to inhale the holy spiritual vibrations that pervade the atmosphere of the Ashram. What I am going to say?'

Such is their attitude. Similar was Brigadier Yadu Nath Sing's yearning, too.

When he was here during the Sadhana Week, he described to me his mode of approach towards the saint of Ananda Kutir.

It is a strange thing,' the Brig. said: 'I have stayed here for days together. Before I come, my mind is filled with eagerness to ask Swamiji about this and that. But, when I ultimately find myself in his presence, it seems as though that very presence is the answer. I have no need to ask any question.' And a true Sadhu among high-ranking army officers, you will at once see in the Brigadier a man of parts, noble and gentle, but not the least trace of the vanity of position.

26th APRIL, 1949

JUDITH TYBERG SPEAKS

This evening, during Satsang, Siva requested Srimathi Judith Tyberg to speak and she was ready to do so.

She dwelt at length on the deplorable conditions in the West and emphasised the need for the quick and rapid spread of Eastern thoughts and the spiritual culture of the East in the Western nations. She felt that America was in need of it, and was ready for the message.

She had come to India to learn Indian Spiritual Science. She had studied the Indian philosophy and more than the philosophical portions of it which she was able to learn in the universities, she felt that the influence that actual living spiritual personalities like Siva himself had created in her lasting impressions and given her strength and courage to take the message of the East to America and say boldly 'Here is a message from the living messiahs of the East in whom the ancient spirit of Vedanta still lives.'

Judith Tyberg felt that her quest for the living spirit in India had taken to Siva's Ashram at Rishikesh: and she said that during the few days of her stay here, she has been able to learn a lot and absorb the message of divine life.

ASHRAM TRAINING

After listening to Siva's favourite and humourous Kirtans and songs at the conclusion of the Satsang, Srimathi J.T. was ready to leave for her Kutir. She said: 'Good night, Swamiji.'

'OM Namo Narayanaya! That is the Sadhu's way of saying 'Good night'. At every turn, utter the Lord's name. Even the mere Good-night forms part of Japa.'

'OM Namo Narayanaya, Swamiji. Yes, it is a nice way.'

29th APRIL, 1949

RELENTLESS SERVICE

Before the class started, Siva himself had gone round the entire Ashram waking up all the inmates and all the visitors including J.T., so that they might attend the class. Siva found J.T. fast asleep and so left her alone. But, the moment she awoke, she ran into the Bhajan Hall and quietly slipped in. Such is the liberty that people at once take of Siva, induced, no doubt, by his own spontaneous, love and kindness: J.T. at the conclusion of the class, mildly put in: 'How is it that I did not wake, Swamiji? Did you wake me up today also?'

'Yes, yes:' replied Siva, 'and you were fast asleep. I thought you were tired and so left you. Later, I sent Vishnuji twice. Perhaps, you were too tired to get up. Anyhow, it is good you have come to the class.'

MUSEUM: A UNIQUE FEATURE

'So, you are leaving? OM Namo Narayanaya. Please come again and come every year. Spend a few months here. Take an aeroplane and you are here in a day.'

'I shall, Swamiji. In any case, I shall always depend on your blessings and kind thoughts to help me in my work in America. I have learnt a lot during my stay at this Ashram. I was greatly delighted to see the Yoga Museum. I have decided to set up a similar one in America. It is so simple and grand. The idea is simply unique.'

'Very good. I shall send you cuttings of pictures, etc. Though I may not be able to send you an exact replica, I shall try to furnish you with what all I can to make your museum complete, as the one here is.'

Thanks very much, Swamiji. You are so good and generous.'

YOUTH CAN'T UNDERSTAND

Turning to Swami Chinmayanandaji, Siva asked: 'Is Shroff also leaving today?'

Perhaps, no: Swamiji. His health was very bad last night.'

'What happened?'

'Swamiji, he easily gets upset over trifles. The problem of travelling by day in the hot sun, in a bus, worried him so much that he got blood pressure again.'

'Quite true. Only old people know their difficulties. It is a trifling thing to youth: but it is a real problem to an aged man like him, with all his weak heart and blood pressure. A young man cannot understand. I was doing double- somersault when I was young. But now diabetes, etc., make it difficult for me to walk, too. Age has its own limitations. You should try to understand and sympathise."

MAY, 1949

1st MAY, 1949

THE BOOK THAT STIRRED

At the night Satsang, Sri N. Parasuraman of Madura Divine Life Society related his experiences. His acquaintance, he said with unbounded enthusiasm and Sattvic pride, with Siva dated back to 1937. During this great year in his life, he came across Siva's booklet 'Samadhi in Six Months'. This entirely changed my life. It stirred the depths of my heart. It made the deepest impression on my mind. I began to correspond with Swamiji. I got a most charming letter almost immediately: this letter I still preserve and read frequently. Since then, I am trying to follow Swamiji's teachings.'

3rd MAY, 1949

LEPROSY RELIEF

Visitors to Sivanandashram would invariably notice that outside the dispensary would assemble, morning and evening, a number of leprosy patients from the neighbourhood: and Siva's special instruction to the Sadhaka in charge of the dispensary has been to pay the utmost care and attention to this class of suffering humanity and to treat them with Narayana-Bhava. Thus, whereas the Sadhaka may omit to salute with folded palms a sick Sadhu, he would never forget this when a leper-Narayana approaches him. Siva himself has ever taken the keenest interest in the treatment of dangerous infectious cases: and the Sadhus of Rishikesh would relate with amazement how he would sleep with cholera patients, and serve

them in every possible way, without the least thought of his own safety.

Rev. Taylor of the American Leprosy Mission was here yesterday with a U.P. Government official and requested Siva's assistance in the matter of leprosy relief in Rishikesh. Siva readily agreed, and later explained to us:

The Government officials and also the State's Health Minister Dr. Gairola have always sought the assistance of Sannyasins for this work. Why? Because these helpless victims of their Prarabdha are neglected by all other sections of the community. A practising doctor would refuse to treat lepers: for, his practice would cease, and with that, his earning. People are afraid to go near leprosy patients. Only a Sannyasin who has renounced worldly life and who has no fear for even death can boldly undertake such humanitarian service."

Arrangements were made last evening itself to visit the leper colony this morning. As usual, Siva was able to determine not only the main issues, but all the side-issues connected with it, in the twinkling of an eye. 'Dr. Subramaniam will accompany us. We will take out a list of the lepers, and classify them variously. We should separate the children who are not affected by the disease and take care of them. We should also render proper treatment to the patients who are in the initial stages of the disease and try to save them.

'Dayananda Swamiji, please arrange for a tonga at 7 o'clock tomorrow morning. Please get Rs. 10 worth of laddus for distribution there. Go and tell the people in the colony that we shall be coming at 7 o'clock. Take some money also with you for

distribution.' So, these are as important to him as the main work itself.

This morning, as soon as the morning class was over, we started. Siva enquired if there were sufficient papers for taking down the names of the patients: how many pens have been taken and if we were sure that there was ink in them, etc. Such keen care and attention to details is essential if the main job is to be done efficiently and with ease. As soon as the tonga began to move, we had 'Jaya Ganesha' Kirtan.

At the leper colony, the people were called and a list was prepared. Siva took keen interest in each case and was quick to detect the cases of children unaffected by the disease.

As soon as the patient had given his name, etc., Dayanandaji would hand him two laddus.

So, we stood there for nearly two hours noting down the names of the patients, the type they were suffering from, and whether it was of an infectious nature or not. When everything was over, Siva called two educated compounders who were also patients and instructed them to get from the Ashram charitable dispensary whatever medicines they needed, for injection, local application, etc. After making them all sing Kirtan, we left.

"You have no shoes? When you visit the colony, you should wear shoes,' Siva said to me: and, after a pause, he continued: If you depend on the Lord, He will provide you with invisible shoes.'

5th MAY, 1949

A HAIR'S BREADTH TO SAMADHI!

Swami Chidanandaji had delivered a thrilling discourse during the morning university class, on the importance of rooting out selfishness in the Sadhaka, and dealt with the various methods of achieving this end. At the conclusion, Siva asked Sri Parasuraman if he had taken notes of the lecture.

'Swamiji, I am maintaining a diary of all that takes place here.'

'Hearing of a lecture is only the beginning of Sadhana. Just close your eyes now and think, of how many times a day you have allowed the fullest play for your selfishness. Make a note of this in your diary. You will be astounded at your own spiritual state. Searching analysis will reveal to you the subtle forms that selfishness assumes. You must gradually endeavour to eradicate all these.

'Some people imagine that they have reached very near Perfection. They feel that there is only a hair's breadth to Nirvikalpa Samadhi. They have had the experience of Samprajnata Samadhi itself! They close their eyes and dream. For, in every-day life, you will find them full of selfishness, full of egoism and all the evil dualities.

'When they close their eyes, some people will imagine that they see the Atma Jyotis. Why does not Nirvikalpa Samadhi follow immediately-they will ask.

'Others there are who claim to have seen Lord Krishna. 'Lord Krishna came once, twice and thrice, too: but why does He not appear before me a fourth time?'-is their problem. These people only delude themselves. You must apply yourself vigorously to the

eradication of selfishness. Surrender yourself to the Lord. Live for Him. He will then reveal Himself to you.'

TO EACH, ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS

Sri Swami Sivayogiji Maharaj of Karnataka, a learned exponent of the Veerasaiva philosophy, and a Mahatma of great repute belonging to the lineage of sage Basavanna, has come to the Ashram. He is doing a great deal of propaganda in the South: and he has an idea of starting a Yoga Ashram where one could learn the actual technique of Yoga (i.e., in addition to a theoretical grasp of the principles). He has sought Siva's help in this connection and his visit is mainly to get a blue-print from Siva of the lines on which he should proceed.

During the night Satsang, Sri Swami Chidanandaji delivered an inspiring discourse on the necessity of practising Sadachara which has been variously described by the founders of the various Yoga-Margas (as Yama-Niyama by Patanjali Maharshi, as Sadhana Chatushtaya by Vedantins, as Sadachara by Bhaktas, and as Chitta-Suddhi by Karma Yogins), as Sadachara is the very basis or foundation of Yoga Sadhana. C. explained that both the foundation and the culminating point of Sadhana according to the various points of view were the same: only the external appearance of the intermediary process seems to differ, though even here, the internal achievements are the same. C. emphasised that the necessity of these fundamentals has been recognised and acclaimed by all the religions of the world. He incidentally mentioned that the glory of Karma Yoga lay in the fact that it is a system which does not allow

the Papa Purusha to raise his head even for a second, and that it is a system which enables one to acquire divine virtues rapidly.

Swami Siva Yogiji who was then requested to address the gathering, said that the Sadharana Dharma (like Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya, etc.) was universal, while there appear to be differences only in Visesha Dharma (rituals, etc.) Everyone should, therefore, practise these virtues.

(This portion of his talk so exactly coincided with Chidanandaji's that it led one to wonder if C. had not divined the Swami's mind. Strange are the powers of a Yogi!)

Continuing, Sivayogi Swamiji said: The greatest service to Hindu Dharma has been rendered by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who has, during the past twenty years, spread the knowledge of the several Yogas throughout this country, and in foreign lands, too. And, he, too, has insisted on the need to direct one's attention to the fundamentals and to the acquisition of Daivi Sampath which are universal principles. Swamiji has dealt with and clearly expounded every branch of Yoga so that not one Sadhaka will find that he has been neglected. Swamiji has catered to the needs of ALL Sadhakas everywhere in the world: to each one, he gives instructions on the method that is suited to the Sadhaka's temperament and taste. This is a unique feature in Swamiji's writings.'

Later, Swami Sivayogiji revealed that he has been closely following Siva's writings in 'My Magazine'.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The assembled devotees had dispersed.

'Chidananda Swamiji, please explain to Sivayogi Swamiji our Yoga Museum. He wants some hints on the starting of a Yoga Ashram. Please give him some ideas. I shall also talk to him later. I propose to tell him that I will send you to his Ashram so that you can help him in organising the Yoga Ashram. What do you say? It is really a divine life centre only.'

Yes, Swamiji. That will be done.' This is cosmic consciousness in action. Saint or layman-no one will do this. Trade secrets are always trade secrets: and even if one wants to help, he will only talk. Without the least feeling of rivalry (on the contrary, with the feeling of oneness) to help someone else with the same enthusiasm-'I am he' and 'His institution is mine'-we have only heard or read about. In Siva, Trust has Life.

6th MAY, 1949

OLYMPIC YOGA

The morning class was over. Ganga Prasad Sharda's presence drew Siva's attention. When Siva saw people getting up to leave, he said:

'Don't get up. Oh, Ganga Prasadji! Oh Vishnu Swamiji! Both of you demonstrate your skill in the performance of Yoga Asanas. Let us see who wins.'

Both of them got ready and came forward.

Now, Ganga Prasad will demonstrate some difficult Asana. Do something which he will not be able to perform.'

G.P. demonstrated a most wonderful pose where the body had to be subjected to several difficult bends.

V. tried, but could not reach perfection.

'Ganga Prasadji, you have won. Now Vishnu Swamiji will demonstrate something which Ganga Prasadji will not be able to perform.'

V. demonstrated Shakti Chalan Kriya. G.P. could do that. Finally, V. also scored a victory as G.P. did not know Vayu-Bhakshana.

After this, very interestsing, amusing, and instructive contest, Siva said: These competitions have another effect also. When you practise alone or with less efficient people, you slowly develop a satisfaction that you are good. But, when you find someone who can do better, you feel ashamed. You should gradually learn to overcome that: and you should also ever yearn to achieve greater and greater perfection. The goal is THAT and nothing short of it should produce satisfaction.'

DO IT: AND DO IT WELL

Ganga Prasada Sharda of Pilani is a painter, too. He had brought a wonderful drawing done by him. And, he had, not minding the cost, framed it in a thick frame, too.

That is the spirit of a Karma Yogi,' said Siva. 'He does not leave things half-done. He completes everything. If Ganga Prasadji had simply given the painting unframed, there was the chance of this painting being spoilt. In spite of the fact that it would have cost him 30 or 40 rupees to frame it, he has done so. Now, it is safe.'

'Karma Yoga is not to do everything in a slipshod way, thinking that that is the way to remain unattached to the actions and their fruits.

That is Tamasic negligence. Karma Yoga is to do everything efficiently and proficiently and yet to remain unattached to the fruits.'

HAUGHTY SADHU AND HUMBLE MAHARAJAH

After the evening Satsang, a Sannyasin with an imposing appearance began to discuss with Siva the cardinal tenets of his cult and the practice advocated by his Guru and himself.

'Swamiji, from our point of view, even Sravana Manana and Nididhyasana have no significance. Our only Sadhana is listening (mere listening without even trying to grasp through the mind what is being said!) in silence. We do not try to understand, because the Atman is beyond the reach of understanding. Our Guru has told us that that is the best method and that all other practices are meaningless. One day, Truth will shine of Its own accord, without any effort on the Sadhaka's part.'

'Very nice,' replied Siva with his inimitable smile. 'But, the Sadhaka must be a super-Adhikari to grasp the Truth in this manner. To Janaka, the utterance of Tattwamasi once was sufficient, and he realised the Self. But, even if we, nowadays, hear it, millions of times we seem to be far, far away from It.'

After dwelling on several topics, Siva told us: The Maharajah of S. is a great devotee. His Sadhana is a continuous repetition of the name of Lord Rama through- out the twenty-four hours. He has attained great Siddhis in this practice, too. A devotee who happened to sleep on the Maharajah's bed had a vision of Lord Rama which he attributed to the Mantra-Shakti of the Maharajah. The Maharajah is

well-versed in the Upanishads too. Yet, he would say: 'I am only an Abhyasi, not a Bhajani. I am quite unfit for Vedanta.' He was too humble to call himself even an advanced Sadhaka or a Japa Yogi.'

7th MAY, 1949

TAPAS SHAKTI

Siva was showing Swami Sivayogiji round the Ashram. He showed him the room where the books were being stocked.

We have somehow to manage here. Lack of funds, lack of sufficient accommodation-and we have to keep stocks of books in living rooms also, and there is lack of sufficient number of workers who will work for the welfare of the institution till the end."

It is extremely difficult to manage an Ashram,' agreed Sivayogiji.

Yes, yes: you know very well yourself. These people come here renouncing family, worldly prosperity, etc. They wish to be independent. It is difficult to make them feel the responsibility of the work we are doing. People should realise the good an Ashram is doing for humanity at large, and therefore be ever eager to dedicate their lives to an institution. Generally, they come, live here for some time, and, if someone utters a harsh word against them, or even otherwise, out of their whim and fancy, they will say 'OM Namo Narayanaya', leave the Ashram and go somewhere else. Somehow, I please them, serve them and let the work go on.'

'Swamiji, it is all due to your Tapas Shakti that the institution has grown so rapidly and widely. No other cause could have contributed to this grandeur.'

MAHARANI OF MYSORE AT THE ASHRAM

News reached the Ashram in the afternoon that Her Highness the Maharani of Mysore would be paying a visit to Rishikesh. With his characteristic cordiality, Siva had instructed everyone in the Ashram to prepare to receive Her Highness. Siva himself looked to the details of the arrangements.

Just as she arrived at the Ashram, the boys were doing Ganga Arati. The pious Maharani watched the prayers with great devotion and fervour.

Later, she was received by Siva himself at his Kutir. As they were entering the Kutir, the gramophone was singing Swamiji's records. Her Highness and party listened to them with great joy.

Siva himself showed Her Highness and party round the Ashram-the temple, Bhajan Hall, Library, etc.

'Swamiji, the entire Ashram is simple, neat and grand. I have been following the growth of the institution. I do not know how you were able to achieve so much in so short a time. Only Ishwara could have done this.'

It is all His grace.'

9th MAY, 1949

ANOTHER MAHARANI

Yesterday's birthdate expenses were borne by Her Highness the Maharani of Sitamau. Every year, the Maharani spends a couple of

months in Rishikesh. The pious couple never misses to have Siva's Satsang at least once or twice every year.

This evening, the Maharani came to have Siva's Darshan. She said that she was thirsting to hear Siva's inspiring Kirtans. She had brought with her a 'Mira Bai', a resident of Brindawan and a great devotee of Lord Krishna.

And, Siva poured out his sweet melody; the Maharani and party listened spell-bound.

The little boy of Swarg Ashram, Vaidji, who had been brought to the Satsang by his mother, found the boy too irrepressible to allow him to sit quiet and listen. He could not sing: he was less than a couple of years old. Therefore, he got up and began to dance. Every time Siva changed the Kirtan, he would look inquisitively into Siva's face, 'How shall I dance now?', and then start his Nritya. The power of living near a saint is great indeed-if you have a child's heart!

DON'T BE SHY WITH GOD

During the night Satsang, the new visitors caught Siva's attention. He called out to them one by one and asked them to sing Kirtan. An Advocate and another high official offered many excuses, but found that Siva would not yield.

You don't know Kirtan?'

They could not say 'No': for that would be telling a lie.

'I know, Swamiji.'

Then, sing. What is the difficulty in saying Ram Ram Ram?'

Each one then poured forth his heart; shyness vanished: and at that psychological moment, the devotee gets his entrance into the hall divine.

10th MAY, 1949

RECIPE FOR BRILLIANCE

Hari Badri Narayan of South Africa, who is now a student of Lucknow University, had come to the Ashram for the summer vacation.

'Oh Hari! Go on with your class lessons here, too. Prepare well for the next year. The first six months' lessons you should study well now itself. If you have a good grounding, you will be able to grasp the lessons quickly in the class. Even if you later have to be absent from the class owing to illness, etc., you will not be the loser. And, in the end, you will get brilliant success in the final examination. You should practise Sadhana also, and do some Seva to the Ashram. At the same time, you should prepare yourself for the next year's course.'

That is exactly what Siva himself used to do, during his college days. Out of his own practical experience, he had found this method effective. Siva never tires of letting the entire world share the secrets of his success.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ADVOCATE

The Advocate Saheb came late to the morning class.

You have come to earn something more valuable than all the world can give you. There you give your blood to earn a livelihood: here you have the inexhaustible wealth of spiritual knowledge. Do not miss a single opportunity of attending Satsang and learning life's greatest truths.

It is all the more important for you because you have chosen the legal profession. As an Advocate, you are bent on achieving success: you might be tempted to resort to falsehood, cunningness, etc., to achieve the end. Please do not be discouraged. You can be a spiritual aspirant even now. Enter the Bench. Or, become a Legal Adviser somewhere. Or, at least, do not take up criminal cases. In any case, let not money be your goal. Always strive to practise truth, righteousness and try to serve the people.'

PRACTICE vs. BOOK-KNOWLEDGE

A Parsi boy who had come to the Ashram was attracted by the Seva that the Ashram Charitable Dispensary was doing: he desired to learn medicine.

'OM Namo Narayanaya. I do not find you at all nowadays, either in the office or in the dispensary. What are you doing?'

'Swamiji, I am learning medicine.' 'Learning medicine? Where?'

I am copying out your book 'Family Doctor', Swamiji.' That you call learning medicine? Would you like to copy the word 'sugar' on a piece of paper and taste its sweetness? Learn it in practice. Go to the dispensary and assist the present doctor-in-charge. You will know the names of the diseases and how to prepare each mixture. That is the better way to learn.'

This principle applies to everything, especially to Yoga Sadhana.

15th MAY, 1949

VEDANTIC GREETING

Tat Twam Asi! Krishnananda Swamiji,' greeted Siva as K. met him on the way to the Bhajan Hall for the morning-class, at the same time bowing to him, with folded palms. K. reflected for a while what this might mean. Siva explained.

You want to know what it is? This is the new Vedantic greeting. The European says, 'Good morning': a South Indian says 'Namaskaram': a North Indian says 'Jai Ram ji ki': a Sikh greets 'Sat Sri Akal': a Sadhu greets with 'OM Namo Narayanaya'. Now, this is a new invention for Vedantins. They should greet each other with Tat Twam Asi' or 'Jai Satchidananda'. They should bow to each ether also. Adwaita Vedanta does not prohibit prostrations and respecting one another. In Samadhi, there is no 'other' to bow to. But, when a Vedantin is not always in Samadhi with the non-dualistic consciousness: and he should bow to all with the Bhavana 'Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahman'.

This method of greeting will constantly remind the Vedantin of his own essential nature which is Satchidananda or of the great, formula, the Mahavakya Tat Twam Asi'. The more people he greets with this formula, the more continuous will be the Brahmic thought. This will greatly help the Sadhaka in raising the Brahmakara Vritti, hasten the dawn of Brahma Jnana or Final Liberation. Tat Twam Asi.'

Padmanabhanji, now gone thin and weak, was helping Siva in picking out books for free distribution.

You have gone so thin nowadays. You are not taking any food, I think."

"Swamiji, it is two months since he took proper food," rejoined Dayanandaji.

This is no good. You should take Mitahara always. You will now exhibit great Vairagya and give up food. Later, there will be a reaction and you will swallow maunds of fruits. Such Sadhana is not of much use. You should adopt such measures as you will be able to carry through unto the last.'

SIVA GANGA PYAOO

In the morning was declared open the Siva Ganga Pyaoo. In view of the fact that there was another Pyaoo (a shed where water would be served to thirsty pilgrims) nearby, we had almost given up the idea of having one in the Ashram. In time, Siva reminded about it:

'No, no. That does not matter. Let there be another Pyaoo nearby. But, we should also have one in the Ashram. It is a great service to the pilgrims which should not be given up. Even if no one contributes for the expenses, let us spend out of the Society's funds and open the Pyaoo.'

There is a beautiful lesson in it. Often Karma Yogins lull themselves into a false belief that there are sufficient workers in the field and that they can 'retire' into a cave. Some workers neglect actual field service with the same plea, and seek positions of respect. It is a

mistake. Even if there are a million people in the field, a Karma Yogin should not abandon his duty, his Sadhana of selfless service.

ANOTHER VISHNU

During the night Satsang, some of the people assembled got up in the middle. Torches flashed: and the centre of attention was shifted to an insect moving on the floor.

'What is it, scorpion?' asked Siva.

'No, Swamiji. It is another variety of....' Vishnuji fumbled for the proper word.

from the 'Another variety of Vishnu?' remarked Siva and we all had a hearty laugh.

Truth in jest! Lord Vishnu is the Indwelling Presence in even the tiniest or the most venomous insect. See Him in all. Or, as the remarks were addressed particularly to Vishnuswamiji, see your own Self, Vishnu, in this insect, too. It is only another variety of the same thing called Vishnuswamiji. What a fountain of wisdom and philosophy in humour!

17th MAY, 1949

DELUSION WITHIN DELUSION

Sri Ganga Prasadji with his party of students had made a lightning trip to Badrinath and had returned today. He had made a few rapid water-colour paintings of the Himalayan landscape at various places en route and was showing them to Siva at night. Wishing to see them clearly, Siva flashed his torch across the pictures.

'What is this? I see only a jumble of colours.

'Swamiji, if you put out the torch, you will see more of the beauty of the painting.'

'Oh, the darkness adds charm to the pictures?' He put out the torch. This is delusion within delusion. This is one way of cheating people. Have you ever bought shoes at night? They will be glittering. In the morning, you will be sorely disappointed. In the photograph, the prospective bride will appear most charming. When you come face to face with her, you will be disillusioned. This is all delusion within delusion. If there is real beauty in an object, it should always be beautiful, in light or in shade. When you flash the torch of true wisdom on these shining objects, you will at once perceive their hollowness and ugliness.'

22nd MAY, 1949

SURGEON FOR THE EGO

Dr. Kanakasabesa Iyer from Madras was introduced to Siva in the morning, as an eminent surgeon.

Without getting up from his seat, as usual, without so much as to enquire whether it would be convenient for the doctor, and after the several usual enquiries about his comforts in the Ashram itself, Siva turned to the group of visitors and inmates standing around him:

Would any of you like to consult him and utilse his services?'

What a complete absence of formalities and the artificial falsities of behaviour commonly known as etiquette! Siva's Religion is the Religion of Love and Service. It is this Religion that fills him and is

incarnate in him. Its irrepressible fragrance wafts around the moment the slightest movement of the wind is caused and an opportunity presents itself. Thus, the only thought the presence of an eminent surgeon before him could evoke in him was 'Any service?'

Siva Narayanji got himself examined. And, so on: one by one. Siva's mind must have been working very fast, trying to recollect people in the locality who had any use for this surgeon.

'Oh Doctor Saheb, Jayadayal Goenkaji of Gita Bhavan has some trouble with his eyes. We shall go and see him.' 'Yes, Swamiji,' was all that the doctor could say.

Without the least loss of time, milk was brought for the doctor and his family, and after the doctor's breakfast, Siva and the doctor left for Gita Bhavan.

On return from Gita Bhavan (and for the first time, after exhausting all possible sources of service), Siva expressed his great appreciation of the doctor's knowledge and readiness for service.

You are a great surgeon. Can you operate on the ego of a man?' asked Siva.

'Certainly not, Swamiji. Well, I need the operation upon myself: and you are the surgeon for it. So I have come to you.'

23rd MAY, 1949

A DAY'S GAINS

After hardly five hours of rest, the Ashram was buzzing with activity at 4.30 a.m. this morning. A mild OM at the threshold

brought Mrs. Mohanlal Saksena (wife of India's Rehabilitation Minister) and others who were staying with her, out of the chamber of the Goddess of Slumber. The lady and the children looked extremely fresh after what a city-dweller might have considered hardly a nap of a few hours.

The morning university class began with Kirtan, Guru Stotras, Shanti Patha and prayers. Ere the mind could have sufficient leisure to fall back into its favourite grooves, Swami Krishnanandaji began his learned exposition of Panchadasi, dinning into the ears of the listeners-One alone is true: Truth is thy own Self: that Truth should be meditated upon constantly, forgetting the wrong notion that the body is the Atman. Close on his heels follow Sri Ramamurthy's Karma Yoga lecture, interestingly interspersed with stories, similes and illustrations, concisely and precisely telling the Sadhaka how he should behave in this realm of duality-for, by this time, the rays of the sun have begun to illumine to the eyes of the mortal, the vast creation of multiplicity and this talk on Karma Yoga gives the most timely reminder that 'Even this is the Virat Swarupa of the Lord: it need not frighten you or bewilder you: serve without egoism: do your duty: realise the Self through all this.' (On alternate days, Sri Swami Chidanandaji delivers his inspiring lectures on Raja Yoga.

Here again one is taught to feel that the perception of each external object now gradually coming into the Sadhaka's vision as morning advances, can be controlled and sublimated by an inner process of control of mind, that culminates in Samadhi revealing the true nature of the Self.). From Unity to diversity: from diversity back to Unity again. That is the process.

Nor should one imagine that the students are ever kept in the dizzy heights of Vedanta and that the layman who listens to these discourses could sink into Tamas, unable to rise into Sattva. As soon as the Raja Yoga class is over, Vishnu Swamiji will call 'attention' and begin the Yogic drill. All done sitting-Yoga Mudra, Ushtasana, lateral twists of the spine, Paschimottanasana, an elementary physical culture, Uddiyana, Agnisara, Kapala-bhati, Bhastrika (slow, internal and rapid), Sitali, Sitkari and eye-exercises. This round of exercises saves (those so inclined) from relapsing into Tamas, and adds to the Sattva of others.

These are immediately followed by Siva's inspiring Kirtans and songs, each word pregnant with the Self-realisation of the sage, thrilling, elevating and tranquilising. One is inclined to feel at this stage that all the previous items were preparatory stages to this grand culmination. Maha Mantra Kirtan, Maha Vakya Kirtan, Soham Mantra Kirtan, Gita Kirtan, Yoga-Vasishtha Kirtan-it is then that you are thankful for the bending and twisting and breathing that you had just passed through, for they have enabled you to enjoy the thrill of the Kirtan and attune yourself to Siva, by driving away the Tamas that might still have been lingering in the body and mind. The final OM chanting enables you to feel actually the unreality of externals and the Reality of the Kutastha. With a prayer for the peace, prosperity and health of all (for, after the spiritual drill in the morning, you are in a pure state with a powerful Will which you are taught by Gurudev to use for the good of all), the class concludes. Then follow individual or group Suryanamaskara, Asana training and practice.'

Needless to say that Mrs. Saksena and children enjoyed this morning class immensely, indeed.

Later Mrs. Saksena and party were shown the Photo-Phonics Department and the Sivananda Art Studio; they (especially the children) witenssed with great delight, the movie films, projected through the editing equipment.

Soon after this, the Yoga Museum. The significance of the arrangement, the meaning of the composition of the museum, etc., were succinctly explained to the party.

What a fund of knowledge does one gain in such a short time!

No wonder that a visitor remarked after last night's Satsang: 'I have never attended such a wonderful Satsang meeting as this!' Even during the night Satsang, the mind is never allowed a moment to stray away. Beginning with Kirtans, Bhajans, study of the Gita, Upanishad and Tulasi Ramayana, the evening programme includes a lecture by Swami Chinmayanandaji on the Upanishads and concludes with Siva's Kirtans and Bhajans (in English, Hindi and Sanskrit). Siva often distributes a few of his spiritual vitamin tablets in short, crisp and sweet poems each one with a high concentration of spiritual truth, humour, and practical instructions! After Siva's Kirtan, there is OM-chanting, Maha Mrityunjaya Japa, Arati, and Peace Chant.

Someone described this as Indra Sabha. And, aptly so: for there is every kind of instrumental music, many vocal Bhajanists hailing from various parts of the country singing the Bhajans of various

great devotees. A wonderful mixture of indescribable ingredients, sweet, pleasant and God-intoxicating!

The sun was still young, and a calm pervaded the atmosphere near the Ashram. The tranquility of the Abode of Bliss, with Mother Ganges perennially humming the Pranava, seemed to reflect the Peace Within of the Lord of Ananda Kutir (our Siva) who, calmly and silently, was going through the letters, signing them, and checking the addresses on book-packets.

It was calm before a spiritual storm.

Dr. Gairola, the Tehri Minister of Health, came in and bowed to Siva.

'Swamiji, OM Namo Narayanaya: has not Sri Mohanlal Saksena come in yet?'

'No. Is he coming?'

'Yes, Swamiji. He had promised to be here now and asked us to pick him up. By the way, our Congress President, Rashtrapati Pattabhi Sitaramiah is here along with some other Congress leaders.'

'Please ask them to come to the Ashram.'

The Minister, with the help of a couple of Ashramites, at once brought in the Rashtrapati. Thakur Krishan Singhji, Education Minister of Tehri, and Sri Sampurnanandji, Education Minister of the U.P., and Sri Paripurnananda were also with the Rashtrapati.

Even as he was entering the D.J. Hall, after being received outside it by Siva himself, the Rashtrapati was attracted by the

Suryanamaskara and Yoga Asana Charts. The party seated themselves in the Hall, facing the Ganges and the Himalayas. First, books started flowing around to them, Siva silently selecting for each one the books that would be most welcome to him.

(Messengers had gone about fetching tea, fruits, sweets etc.!)

The Rashtrapati's first remarks were: 'Swamiji, the more we learn, the 'smaller' we seem to become. What I

have learnt and experienced during these seventy years has, I think, enabled me to begin life. I personally believe in Samskaras and that nothing is lost'

Yes, yes: you continue the evolution in the next birth.'

By the time, the Rashtrapati had obtained two sets of Suryanamaskara Photographs, and they had all taken their seats for the Prasad and coffee that were awaiting them, another party consisting of-

Sri Mohanlal Saksena, Union Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation,

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament,

Sri T. Prakasam, ex-Premier of Madras,

Sri Prof. N.G. Ranga, a Congress leader,

Sri Thirumala Rao, M.P.

had also come in.

Books and Prasad flowed competing with the Ganga. The Rashtrapati was astonished.

You seem to have a Kamadhenu here' he exclaimed.

Sri Sampurnanandaji replied him: 'It is all the glory of Swamiji's Tapasya. What cannot Tapasya achieve?'

Now the Parliament was in full session at Ananda Kutir. Discussion, questioning, heckling, humour-all were given full, informal play. One Minister vied with the other in claiming that he was keenly interested in the visit to the Ashram. Sri Sampurnanandaji was emphatic: 'I am in charge of the Ecclesiastic Portfolio. Both Hinduism as well as Christianity are my concern. So, I have come to visit this great religious institution.' Tehri Ministers replied to this with a smile: for they have always considered the Ashram their own. To Sri Mohanlal Saksena, the Ashram is his own home and the abode of one whom he adores and admires.

As these discussions were going on, Sri Thirumala Rao quietly slipped away and joined Siva for a private talk and a 'closer view' of one whom he had always admired from a distance.

The debate was in full swing. Ultimately, everyone concluded that they had all done the wisest thing:

It is a God-given opportunity for all of us.'

Prof. Ranga's gaze was attracted by the Telugu books in the almirah. 'Doctor Saheb! There are Telugu translations of Swamiji's works also.'

Calmly and with all the seriousness of a seasoned Parliamentarian, Sri Thirumal Rao rejoined: "Why, Swamiji is an all-India figure, nay, his influence has reached beyond India's shores, too. He is a world-figure now.'

Someone noticed that Sri Mohanlal Saksena was merely witnessing the table. When the cup of coffee was taken near him, he quietly said: Today is Ekadashi. I am fasting.'

For a high-ranking Minister to say that! No wonder: he is a great admirer of Siva, one of whose main teachings is Fast on Ekadashi.'

After the discussion on the merits and glory of Ekadashi Vrata, among the members and Ministers was over, with the Rehabilitation Minister adamant in his resolve.....

Siva whispered to us: 'We shall do Kirtan for a minute.' Sri Thirumala Rao at once caught up with the idea and made the announcement. Siva began with OM thrice. Immediately Sri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar sat cross-legged in his chair, in the customary Indian fashion while praying.

'Hare Rama' Maha Mantra, quickly, followed by the Song of Admonition. Silent nodding of the head with half-closed eyes while Siva sang:

Time sweeps away Kings and Barons

Where is Yudhisthira, where is Asoka?

Where is Valmiki, where is Shakespeare?

Where is Napoleon, where is Sivaji?

Can you expect real Santi if you waste your time in cards and cinemas,

In novels newspapers?

The leaders were suddenly awakened to the realities of life when Siva thundered:

When your throat is choked at the time of death, who will help you for your Salvation?

The Rashtrapati, who was, till then, reclining against a pillar, suddenly sat up, as if to ask: 'What is it you are saying?'

Then followed instruction: the Song of 'A Little'.

Later, Gita Kirtan, Upanishad Kirtan and Yoga-Vasishtha Kirtan.

Jeeva Kalpana, Jagat Kalpana,

All is Kalpana, Deergha Swapna

Sri Prakasham, in a perfectly prayerful mood, nodded assent. Then 'Soham Kirtan' ending with

Sarvesham Swasti Bhavatu

Sarvesham Shantir Bhavatu

Sarvesham Purnam Bhavatu

Sarvesham Mangalam Bhavatu

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah Sarve Santu Niramayah, Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu Maa Kaschit Duhkha Bhag Bhavet.

Om Santih Santih Santih!

Asato Maa Sat Gamaya

Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya

Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

OM Purnamadah Purnamidam Purnaat Purna-mudachyate, Purnasya Purnamaadaaya Purnameva- avasishyate

Om Santih Santih Santih

This conclusion of the Kirtan impressed all, for that indicated the true Jnani's attitude 'Sarva Bhuta Hite Ratah' (devoted to the welfare of all).

As the party was leaving the Ashram, Padmanabhanji came up with his battery of cameras. The whole gathering formed into a group. Click.... click. Thank you-bowed P.

Someone remarked: 'All these cameras, too?"

The Rashtrapati was ready-witted: Swamiji has developed a modern Ashram on our ancient ideals.'

25th MAY, 1949

MAHARAJAH OF SITAMAU

Siva was having his lunch when the Sitamau Rajah was seen coming towards the Ashram in a boat. He had sent word previously that he would be coming to Ananda Kutir today to have Siva's Darshan. Even without finishing the lunch, Siva got up and walked up to the Ghat to receive the Maharajah.

Straightaway the party wended its way to the Mandir. They sang the Kirtan in chorus, led by Swami Chidanandaji. The Raja Saheb offered bael leaves and flowers to Lord Viswanath in great devotion and sang a few inspiring hymns in praise of the Lord. Coming out of the temple, he bowed to Siva and said:

I desire this one boon from the Lord and from your holiness. May devotion ever dwell in my heart! May I strive to become a true Bhakta. May I ever have Smaran of the Lord, my Lord Rama.'

The Raja Saheb then went round the temple. He noticed the big marble slab on the walls of the sanctum sanctorum put up to commemorate the inauguration of the Viswanath Mandir Moola Dhana with a generous contri- bution of ten thousand rupees which he had made in memory of Her late Highness the Maharani of Sitamau.

'And, even this act was made by me only with this one motive at heart. May I have devotion to Lord Rama! I felt that Swamiji's Ashram Mandir founded here through Swamiji's Sat Sankalpa would fulfill that purpose. The worship done here would bring about the peace of the departed soul and our Kalyan also."

Raja Saheb believes only in devotion, though, as he said while Chidanandaji was explaining the Yoga Museum, he had mastered the Prasthanatrayi. 'I want only devotion. I do not want Mukti even. I fully believe in the meaning of the stanza:

अभिमानं सुरापानं गौरवं रौरवं समम् ।

प्रतिष्ठा सुकरीविष्ट त्र्यं त्यक्त्वा हरि भजेत् ।।

Abhimana is like Surapanam (drinking of toddy): respect in the worldly sense is equal to Raurava hell: getting established in name and fame is equal to a pig's faecal matter: one should renounce these three, and then worship Hari.

Siva greatly admired the Raja Saheb's humility.

Milk and fruits were brought. But the Raja Saheb went on repeating: I have come here only to receive Swamiji's blessings that I may have devotion to Lord Rama.' He then touched Siva's feet and departed.

Siva later said to us:

'My children! See the Raja Saheb's humility. And, his thirst for devotion to His lotus feet. That should be a Sadhaka's motto.

It is, no doubt, true that Bhakti Sadhana consists in remembering the Lord constantly. Very few people will be able to do this and this alone, without doing anything else. See the Raja Saheb himself. He has been a student of Jnana Marga: he is well read in the Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutras. And, remember that he has been carrying on the business of a State. He has been maintaining his own family. Side by side, he has been carrying on his devotional practices. That is the secret.

'Karma Yoga should be nicely blended with Jnana and Bhakti. Do not be frightened if, during the course of your work, you sometimes forget the Lord, your mind stops the repetition of His name, and you seem to lose the Bhava.

God is the Antaryamin. He will understand your inner motive. You need not tell Him what you are thinking of. He will give you a greater abundance of devotion and Bhava. Early in the morning and at night, say unto the Lord in prayer: 'Oh Lord, whatever I do is your worship only. Please be gracious enough to accept.' This synthesis leads one to the goal very quickly.'

26th MAY, 1949

FULL-BELLIED PRAYERS

The Sadhu Bhojan arranged by Sri Gauri Prasadji of Swarg Ashram was in progress. Sri Narayanaswamiji was continuously singing some Stotras and Mantras. Siva asked Atmanandaji to recite a few hymns. The meals were over and the Manager said: 'Ganga Mayya ki Jai'. Siva's voice rang forth from his seat: 'Ohji, wait a bit.' All resumed their seats. Siva asked an old South Indian woman to sing a few Tamil songs in praise of the Lord, of Vairagya, and of devotion. A South Indian young lad well versed in Hindi sang a Hindi Bhajan. This was followed by another Tamil. verse. Siva then prompted a Punjabi mother to sing at Punjabi Bhajan. Every time someone finished, the Manager will say 'Ganga Mayya ki Jai', and every time Siva would stay the dispersal of the crowd. Last came the turn of a Marathi mother. 'Sangitla, some Bhajan of Tukaram.'

The 'Satsang' in the dining hall lasted longer than the dinner itself. The diners who assembled at 10.30 dispersed at 11.45. In sophisticated society, too, dinners last that long. But, what a difference! When you are joyous, when you have satisfied your appetite, when you are 'full', you should utter the Lord's name and sing His praise. Instead, people waste these precious moments in

idle gossip and chit-chatting. The mind, during that period, is calm and 'satisfied' and fresh desires and longings have not risen yet: that is the best time to sing His name and remember Him.

That is the secret which Siva has revealed today. May all hosts take the hint!

LADDU AND MUD-BALLS

'Atmanandaji, please take some Laddus.... (Siva gave him some).... Do we have the same Bhavana when we look at this as when we look at mud-balls?"

Swamiji, we have heard that they are the same: we have an intellectual understanding. But, how difficult to see one in the other!'

'And, yet, people wish to rise at once to Vedantic Sadhana. They do not want Bhakti. They repeat Sivoham' and 'Soham. Till the Sadhaka actually feels and sees that Laddu is a mud-ball, he is not an Adhikari for Vedantic Nididhyasana. It is good to study Vedanta and to try to raise up the Brahmakara Vritti: but the Sadhaka should also engage himself in Nishkamya Karma Yoga and Bhakti, too.'

SONG OF ITIES

Siva was in full form this evening during the Satsang. He read the humorous poems from his Vedanta Jyoti': people often roared with laughter. Then he sang a couple of Tamil songs; then Hindi Bhajans, at the same time playing on the Harmonium. Then he suddenly sprang up and roared:

The Lord has enumerated in the Gita several virtues which every Sadhaka should develop to perfection if he wants to attain Mukti. Most of the virtues depend upon one another. Find out the quality that you lack; consciously develop it. Introspect. Analyse. Eradicate the opposite evil quality.'

He sang the Song.

'If you sit at a particular place and at a particular time, for meditation daily, the meditative mood will come automatically.

'Simplicity: have always the motto: Simple living and high thinking. Gandhiji was revered throughout the world even though he was clad but in a loin cloth. The fullness of awakened divinity should shine through you. Merely putting on beautiful clothes will not do.

When inside there is dirt and ugliness, merely putting on costly dress is sheer hypocrisy. You try to deceive yourself and God. Clean the heart: purify it: then people will worship you.'

Siva noticed a Rishikesh Sadhu who disapproves of the use of English language, sitting in the audience.

'Oh Swamiji Maharaj, (In Hindi) I am only repeating what the Lord has said in the Gita. You read it in Sanskrit. I have put it in English. The idea is the same. The purpose is the same. Only a difference in the mode of expression, in a superficiality-the language.

'English also will be the common language in India for another 20 or 25 years: afterwards also, it will be one of the main languages here. People will want to go overseas for higher education and research.

Man is not satisfied with a little income: nor with a little knowledge. He wants to earn thousands and is eager to extend his knowledge.'

Then he looked at us. We had been asked to keep ourselves in readiness to sing Nama Ramayana.

I KNOW WHEN YOU SHOULD BEGIN

'No, not now. You should be ever prepared. When I say 'begin', then only can you begin. But, be always prepared.'

The remarks referred to a song: but I take it to be a command for the entire song of life. A Guru knows when his disciple should do what, when he is fit for particular Sadhanas. Disciples often delude themselves into a belief that they are fit for Nirvikalpa Samadhi and that their Guru is obstructing their progress by insisting on work and worship of God. They run here and there, lose themselves in the dense jungle of doubts and difficulties and ultimately

perish. Beloved Sadhaka, stick to the lotus feet of the Guru and do his bidding. He knows best and you will attain your goal.

Siva then sang Kirtans, interspersed with instructions.

SOLUTION FOR WARS

You should sing with Bhava. Sraddha, faith and a belief born of conviction are necessary. Husband pretends to love his wife; wife pretends to love her husband: there is no real love at heart. Similarly, between father and son; between friends too. Real love is the heart's love. Develop this divine love. That is the only way to end quarrels, riots and wars.'

SPEND THE NIGHT IN YOUR OWN KUTIR

Sri Swami Suka Devanandaji who has a big Ashram on the other side of the Ganges-one of the oldest friends and admirers of Siva-had been invited to the Satsang today. He had delivered an inspiring discourse on the necessity during Kali-Yuga of the performance of Karma Yoga. The assembly dispersed: and Sukdevanandaji could not get the motor-boat to go across. Chidanandaji was offering the guests bed, etc., to spend the night in the Ashram. Sri S. wanted to go via Lakshmanjhula. Siva at once saw the point.

'Yes, that is a very good idea. Even though it means additional strain and walking a couple of miles, and loss of an hour's sleep, you will have peaceful rest afterwards.' This is an object lesson for all Sannyasins.

CONSERVE PRANA: INSPIRE, LET THEM PRACTISE

A member of S.'s party acquiesced and added: 'Yes, Swamiji. Further, Swami Sukdevanandaji has to attend the morning class in his Ashram too.'

Siva said: 'Sukdevanandaji! You have learned enough: worked enough. Please take care of your health. If you go on lecturing like this for hours on end each day, you are wasting your life-breath. You should simply inspire people: then they should practise. Later on, all that you need do is to silently watch your disciples progress, occasionally, you can deliver discourses, too. They should! practise and realise themselves. It was friendly advice from sage Siva that went straight to the heart of Sri Swami S.

DECIDE: DO IT AT ONCE

Another member of Sukdevanandaji's party raised some objection, and suggested that they might alll spend the night at Ananda Kutir.

'Swamiji, once you decide, stick to it. Sukdevanandaj is going: you all follow him. Stick to your decisions. Do not waver.'

How many of us fail in this respect This tenacious adherence to decision is SIVA: and that is one of the secrets of his great achievements.

GIRL ABANDONS PARENTS AND FOLLOWS SIVA

Thus came to a glorious conclusion the day's function arranged in memory of the late Sri Gyaneshwari, a grand-daughter of Judge Saheb, in whose memory a Kutir had been built at the Ashram. G's mother, too, was present during the whole day's proceedings. She was greatly pleased.

'Gyaneshwari was a saintly soul. Her devotion to Krishna was equalled only by Mira's. She was Mira herself. She left just when we were arranging for her wedding, to join her Lord. It was she herself who, later, (after she had passed away), asked Judge Saheb to build a Kutir for her in Swamiji's Ashram so that she could be always near him. It was she herself who had arranged all these functions which have drawn Swamiji's grace upon her departed soul.

She wanted to follow Swamiji. She has fulfilled her own wish.'

THEN AND NOW IN KASHMIR

A Professor from Kashmir who has migrated to India (Punjab) has come, with his family. Siva at once recognised him as one whom he had known during his (Siva's) Kirtan-tour in Kashmir.

UNPRECEDENTED CROWD AND SIVA'S AGAD BHUM

'Swamiji, how well do we all remember your famous Agad Bhum song and dance! In spite of all that has happened since those days of peace, plenty and prosperity, the memory is still fresh in us of the eager throngs of men and women and children who would sit through whole days listening to your sweet, stirring Kirtans. I was only a small boy then: but I have the most vivid memory of this one thing in my life.'

His father, who had listened on with approval to his son's talk, now put in his: 'And, what gatherings! Swamiji, in all my life in Kashmir, I have never again seen such a mass of humanity assembled together.'

I was inquisitive: 'Did the figure run to thousands?" Thousands?-the old man felt disappointed. 'Not less than ten thousands every day: and that looked like a sea of heads that swung to and fro in the fashion of waves, to the tune of Swamiji's Kirtan. It was a sight for the gods.'

The old woman I could positively see was lost in a reverie: the picture of Kashmir, then, stirred and roused up by Siva's Kirtan, perhaps floated before her eyes-and she was satisfied within herself.

27th MAY, 1949

OUTSIDE MAYA: INSIDE BRAHMAN

Sri Dipchand Poddar of Calcutta and Sri Rai Bahadur Sri Duttji (President and Joint Secretary of the Kali Kamliwala Kshetra) had come to the Ashram to take Siva's advice on certain Kshetra problems.

When they had explained their difficulties, Siva said: Some amount of criticism has always to be ignored. But when there is wide criticism, know that there is something wrong in the management. Then, we should try to rectify our own internal defects. The general feeling of respectable Sadhus should be recognised, honoured and attended to. But, ignore them who criticise you out of sheer malice.'- was the gist of Siva's advice.

As they were coming out of the kutir (on the first floor above the old Anand Kutir, the dispensary rooms, where the discussions were held), an elderly Sadhu was passing that way. This Sadhu was a great devotee and was fond of Japa and Satsang, though the generality of his Gurubhais believed in Vedantic Sadhana alone. Smilingly, Siva greeted him: 'OM Namo Narayanaya, Swamiji Maharaj.'

'Swamiji, you have made this an imposing building by adding this upper-storey.'

Alluding to the Vedantin's derision of mundane affairs, Siva said: It is all Maya, Swamiji Maharaj. And, yet, this Maya is very necessary. For, in this Kutir, Sadhakas will sit for Dhyana and realise the Self. Through their Sadhana, they will become Brahman, too.'

It looked like a commentary on the 11th Mantra of the Isavasya Upanishad: 'Conquer death through Avidya: and with the help of Vidya, attain Immortality.'

29th May 1949

SCORPION IS KILLED? DON'T KILL

Chinmayanandaji's Upanishad discourse was in progress. A scorpion was noticed near the desk. Vishnuji ran for the customary tongs. Some one flashed a torch on the poor creature. It curled up its tail and assumed the 'alert' position, ever ready to give its assailant a taste of its tail.

A young man in the group ran forwards and without a warning, took out the contents of its bowel with the butt end of his torch. To him, the problem was solved.

'Don't kill!' rang Siva's voice from behind him.

The young man stood glancing alternately at the scorpion and Siva, as much as to say: This scorpion? You want me not to kill this?'

'It is a scorpion, Swamiji. It will sting someone."

'Scorpion or cobra: don't kill. Let it go away untouched or take it alive and throw it away unharmed. Even if a cobra enters your house, you should not kill it. You should leave the house, instead. These poisonous insects do not come often into your house and of their own accord, they don't trouble you. God has given them that instinct to avoid human habitation: for their own good, as well as for the good of man. When they happen to stray into a dwelling, they should be shown the exit; but no harm should be done."

'Killing forms a Samskara in you. It is very difficult to eradicate these Samskaras later on. See: all this Sadhana is directed only at the eradication of the Samskaras embedded in your mind. Once there is complete Vasana-Kshaya, then the Light of the Atman shines of Its own accord. Therefore, you should be particularly careful not to repeat these acts which tend to produce wrong Samskaras.'

In a thoughtful mood, the young man left Siva's Kutir, after the Satsang.

30th MAY, 1949

I AM A SAINT!

Last night's hero reappeared in the morning after the morning class, again: and his countenance indicated the mental conflict To kill a scorpion is not practice of Ahimsa?' This had taken a salutary turn, too, and the problem now appeared to him as 'Sivananda vs. himself. Why should he be instinctively impelled to kill the scorpion, whereas even the very thought was alien to Sivananda?

Siva noticed this the moment his eyes fell on the young man.

'Ohji, no harm is done. The Samskaras are already there. They try to express themselves and thus strengthen themselves, every time an opportunity offers itself. It might so happen that very often you will find yourself powerless to restrain such expression. But, every time these Samskaras get the upper hand, sit down after the event, calmly analyse your own conduct, regret, repent, and resolve to correct yourself. Slowly and gradually, these Samskaras will get thinned out and then they will be annihilated. The evil thought of killing will afterwards never arise in the mind at all. That is the state of a saint.'

After a while, Siva added: 'It is possible, if you diligently practise. Saints do not drop from heaven. They are made by constant practice. I, too, was killing scorpions, once. Strive and attain perfection.'

Between these two sentences, there is an unsaid sentence: 'And, now I am a saint.'

CHANGE THE MIND

Vishnuswamiji wants to go to Uttarkashi and explained that a change would give him more strength to do work when he returns; incidentally, he could also learn certain advanced Hatha Yogic Kriyas at Uttarkashi from an expert there.

'Why do you want a change? What is it that needs a change? Change the mind. Alter the mental attitude. That is the most important thing.'

Everything is everywhere is Vasishtha's emphatic declaration. All that is needed is a change in the mental attitude of man himself. One need never run from place to place in search of anything.

JUNE, 1949

4th JUNE, 1949

A CONVOCATION ADDRESS

A newly-graduated Tamil pundit came to Ananda Kutir to have Siva's Darshan. Siva utilised the opportunity to deliver a short, but thrilling convocation address, to him and through him, to the thousands of his type that go out of the universities year after year.

'Everyone already has the Abhimana of youth. When the hot blood of youthful vigour runs through man's veins, he can hardly be convinced that that period of life will soon pass away and he will soon have to lean on a stick. To add to this Abhimana, now you have got a University degree. In ignorant people, this generally adds one more layer that veils the truth from their vision. A wise student of Yoga like you should do away with Abhimana altogether. Work without Abhimana. You will shine as a great Vidwan and a real Vidwan or one who possesses Atma Vidya.

'You should do Saraswati Upasana. You will then gain Her grace and through Her grace, a powerful tongue, and a brilliant intellect. You will be able to inspire and elevate people. This is very important.

'Whenever you find an opportunity, speak to persons and address gatherings. Always dwell upon a spiritual, moral or religious theme. Inspire people and turn them Godwards. That is the best manner in which you can express your gratitude to the Goddess for Her blessings.

'Write: and write original ideas and thoughts on Upanishads, Gita and Vedanta. Never indulge in silly, trash thinking. You will attain great glory.'

COOLNESS UNDER FIRE

What sort of Victoria Cross should one award to Siva? A soldier on the field of battle, if he keeps his head cool under fire and carries on the fighting till the very last breath is awarded the Cross.

The financial statement of the Society showed a precarious position. Bank balance had come down to the 'nil' figure. There were still debts to be cleared. The problem was placed before Siva.

'Close it down. We have done enough work. Five or six of us will take Bhiksha from Rishikesh and meditate in the Kutirs. As long as there is medicine in the dispensary, we will serve the sick. As long as there are books in the League, we shall distribute them freely. Give away everything to those who need. Put in an announcement in the magazine and issue a circular to say that the Society has been compelled to stop work.' Then he sat up and a list was drawn, of the Ashramites that might have to be told to make their own arrangements for Bhiksha, etc. Siva himself attended the meeting which was convened to tell all Ashramites of the position.

Very soon after this, Siva began to distribute fruits and almonds to workers and visitors, as he said 'to compensate for the curtailment imposed on them by the financial condition of the Society': and books began to flow more freely and in greater abundance to seekers, to do the service while there is yet time.

5th JUNE, 1949

MYSORE MAHARANI AGAIN

A car arrived.

And, Siva was already out of the D.J. Hall to receive Her Highness the Maharani of Mysore on her way back from Sri Badrinath.

Sadhakas were busy and in a few minutes, the Mysore party were enjoying a light but refreshing repast of fruits, sweets and coffee. Books and magazines had already begun to flow round. The entire party went for Ayurvedic Pharmacy products!

We fetched chairs and benches outside the D.J. Hall: but the austere Maharani preferred to sit on the bare ground. The moment Siva had an inkling of her intention, he quickly stooped down and removed the stones and pebbles that were on the terrace and made room for Her Highness to sit. The Maharani and party, needless to say, were wonderstruck at the ever-readiness to serve that Siva had. It is a silent sermon.

6th JUNE, 1949

'I CAN SIT HERE A WHOLE NIGHT'-

Maharani of Mysore In the evening, the royal cars returned to the Abode of Bliss. Siva's abode on the bank of the Ganges has a charm that none can resist. And, the Maharani's pious and devout nature has brought her back to Siva's Kutir.

At her Highness's request, Siva took her to Swarg Ashram, etc. On their return, the evening Satsang started.

Time fled: but everyone was oblivious of it. Half past nine: someone whispered. Siva's sharp ears caught it and his keen intelligence, in the twinkling of an eye, grasped the significance.

'Do you want to go?' Siva turned to one of the young members of the party. The sage in him assumed the ancient role of the Master of masters. 'Wait for a while. There will be more Bhajans, more Kirtan, a short Drama, a discourse....all very interesting programme! Why: if you attend a cinema, you easily reconcile yourself to the loss of sleep and feel content to go to bed at 1 o'clock. Satsang is infinitely more valuable than that....'

The wise Maharani at once interrupted Siva: 'Swamiji, I will stay. If they want to, let them go. There are two cars. They can take one: I will stay. Why: in this Satsang, I can sit till the morning listening to your Bhajans, Kirtans and poems.'

The younger members of the party chimed in chorus: 'We will stay, Swamiji. We don't want to go.'

Just look at the direct method of approach which Siva always adopts and conquers the hearts of all. High or low, he has the same vision: he identifies himself with the people with whom he has to deal; and at once, all formalities are abandoned. Those to whom he addresses himself feel not in the least distressed at the overbearing attitude he adopts. They are at once enchanted by the depth of his interest in their true welfare: and they yield without hesitation.

I was myself the target of such a frontal attack. When I was at the Ashram as a visitor and when I, at the time of taking leave of Siva, remarked that the entire place was heaven, Siva instantly exclaimed:

'It is all built for you only: stay here. Who asks you to go? Resign your job from here.' I was greatly embarrassed: and from that day till his commands were obeyed to the full, these peremptory orders were hovering about the mind drawing me closer and closer to this astounding personality who would dare to take the greatest liberties with the most unknown strangers.

And, the Kirtan came to a close after a thrilling programme with Siva himself taking the greatest share of it with his humorous poems and songs. The party was entertained with milk and fruits. The Maharani was unwilling to leave. True to her words, she dispensed with the rest of the party and stayed nearly till midnight....and even then, only after expressing her desire to spend a couple of quiet days at the Ashram in Siva's Satsang and in the contemplation of the divine.

8th JUNE, 1949

MAHARANI COMES TO STAY

Sure enough, this time with only a couple of attendants, Her Highness has come back to spend a couple of days at the Ashram and to have Siva's 'Satsang'. She arrived late in the evening yesterday and spent the night in the quiet retreat of the Ashram.

Yesterday was Nirjala Ekadashi: and Siva had fasted, as usual, without taking even a drop of water. In spite of the obvious strain on his system, he got up at the appointed time and began to attend to the needs of the Maharani, himself.

One notices this trait in Siva all at once. Heads of religious institutions, as soon as they find that they have won a little name

and fame, segregate themselves from the Common Man and make themselves unapproachable to him. They take the cue from the governmental institutions, and appoint under them a hierarchy of secretaries and assistant secretaries to filter visitors and devotees through...

The other extreme, too, has its obvious disadvantages. If one whose name has spread far and wide and whom many people are eager to see and talk to, every day, lives always 'in the open', he is likely to have a difficult time. He would be able to do no work: and rest would be unknown to him. Siva, the Wise Sage, has adopted the golden mean. At certain periods of the day, he is available to none: neither to a beggar nor to a prince. At other times, he is available to all, either to a beggar or to a prince.

And, so Siva, in spite of the fact that the entire Ashram with its band of selfless workers is ever at his service, chose to attend on the Maharani, himself, in order to teach by example. Fetching them water: bringing them coffee and light tiffin for breakfast; arranging to supply water to the Kutir in which they had been lodged; supervising the sweeping of the verandah of the Kutir, etc., etc.

Her Highness felt a little embarrassed in the beginning. This great sage serving them like this! But the spontaneous attitude of familiarity that Siva adopts towards one and all soon dispels this embarrassment.

Even so it happened on a previous occasion. The Maharani of Singhai was reported sick. And, Siva was in Lucknow at the time. At once he entrained for Banaràs to nurse the Maharani, who was a great devotee. The sick lady was fond of her 'hookah': and soda was

her constant need. Her own attendants would often fail to attend to her needs. Siva would surreptitiously see to it that the hookah was near to where she was at the time.... either in bed or in the study or in the drawing room....and that a few bottles of soda were always placed handy. While the Maharani lay in her bed shouting at her servants for soda, Siva would quietly walk in with a bottle, opened and ready for drinking. And, this service went on, surreptitiously for some time... till the junior Maharani found out and carried the news to the senior.

Surreptitiously, I said. Serving people of affluence has an obvious material reward. Those who serve are conscious of this: and intentionally to curry the favour of the Big Man, they would perform such services as helping him on to his coat, fetching the stick or the hat sometimes the shoes, ostensibly, that it might catch the eye of the big man. That is not selfless service. Therefore, it is prominent by its absence in Siva, whose essential nature is to serve selflessly.

Similarly, in the case of the Maharani of Mysore also, Siva quietly arranged for all that she and her party needed. Once she remarked, 'Swamiji, let the servants do that. You should not bother yourself to do all this.' Prompt was Siva's reply: 'No, no: please don't stand on any formalities. I am your own son.' Similar was the reply to the Singhai Maharani also: 'Ghar-ka-ladka' (son of your own house). Siva would assure the person he serves and thus win his heart. This went home with the Singhai Rani to such an extent that when at Ganga-Sagar, Siva had to carry the senior Rani on his shoulders from the shore to the boat, and when he offered his services to the

junior Rani and she declined them, the senior reprimanded her, saying: 'Why do you feel shy? He is our own Swamiji.'

And, Siva is an adept at finding out, even before it is expressed, a person's need. He noticed that the Mysore Maharani wished to be alone in the Ghat while she bathed. One or two other persons (including a senior official of the Tehri State) were near the Ghat. Siva at once went up to them and asked them to go away. And, Her Highness had her bath. Then, stone-like she sat on a stone on the bank of the Ganges, in meditation. In the meantime, Siva had arranged for her breakfast, for her clothes to be dried properly, etc.

There is a peculiarity about him. As one thing is being done, his mind will leap forward to a dozen succeeding things and he will begin attending to them, too. Thus, one after another, the programme will flow on smoothly. The lady doctor who had accompanied the Maharani was taking her food in the Pangat along with Siva. As they were taking their meals, Siva called Dayanandaji and asked him to have the Kutir on the Ganges bank swept clean, a cot placed in it, and over it a mattress and a pillow, for the lady doctor to take rest after the dinner. What we would generally do would be to think about this when the need stared us in the face and then willy-nilly make some arrangements, always unsatisfactory.

The Maharani had a long conversation with Siva in the evening as she is leaving tomorrow morning. She said: 'I have no mind to leave this place at all.'

PEN-FRIENDSHIP, VEDANTIC SELF-INTRODUCTIONM

Judge Saheb had come to see Siva. After a few minutes' talk with him, Siva suddenly called out to Rama Rup Tiwariji (an Advocate) and introduced them to each other.

'You should be like the German, Tiwariji. You should come forward and introduce yourself. That is the spirit of a Vedantin. (To Judge Saheb) Tiwariji was once a Vedantin. Gradually his heart has been turned towards Karma Yoga and Bhakti. Now he is a Synthetic Yogi.' He left them there to converse with each other and went his way.

This is done through post also. Once Sadhaka is introduced to another: a junior is asked to take the help of a senior, and the latter to help the former. We were surprised once to get a letter from Dr. Sundari of Mangalore that she had received a letter from a European lady requesting the loan of certain of Siva's books. Siva had already introduced them to each other.

GURU IS THE REAL FATHER

Dinner was about to finish. To Siva's left were sitting, first the lady doctor accompanying the Maharani of Mysore, then Sri Rama Rup Tiwari and his son. As Siva looked to the left at the rows of diners, he suddenly noticed something in the boy's throat.

Tiwariji, your son has got goitre?'

Tiwariji was taken aback. He rubbed the boy's throat gently. The boy said it hurt him. Chidanandaji, who was standing nearby, confirmed the diagnosis.

'Swamiji, I was under the impression that it was mere fat, said T. 'But now it appears that you are right. What a pity, Swamiji, all these years I have not noticed it! (To his son) How long has this been the matter with your throat?'

'For a long time,' replied the boy.

'And, imagine,' added T. 'I had not noticed it either. It was Sri Swamiji Maharaj who first noticed it!'

Take this doctor's prescription for the boy. (To the lady doctor) Prescribe something very effective for this boy.'

'Yes, Swamiji, I shall.' And the doctor suggested some patent medicines. It was further a hint to the doctor, and to us all. People generally complain that they do not get 'opportunities for selfless service': when they go about looking for service, they return disappointed, with the feeling that everyone seems to have been provided for, and their services are not needed. But, if only one keeps his eyes and ears open, he is bound to find umpteen opportunities for rendering service. Here, for instance.

DON'T HOLD A PIN WITH YOUR TEETH

I had to do some urgent dispatching work. From a bunch of papers, I had to dislodge some to be thrust into an envelope. I pulled out the pin, held it between the teeth (obviously as a result of the force of habit, but apparently to avoid loss of time in picking up the pin again from the desk), while I sorted out the papers. Siva's eyes were quick to notice this, though I was far away from his table.

'Ohji, don't keep a pin in the mouth. You will unconsciously swallow it and then come to grief.'

Here is a super-parent's care of his spiritual children. Householder-fathers should learn a lesson and take a genuine interest in the welfare of their sons and all children generally. This is one step in Divine Life.

'ANANDA' IS NOT A MERE GLORIFYING SUFFIX

'Saswathanandaji,' called out Siva, to give him some instructions. But, he continued in an entirely different strain.

'Even before embracing Sannyasa formally, you have added on the 'Ananda' suffix. It is all right in a way, for you have been here for quite a considerable number of years now. But, you should understand the significance of this term 'Ananda'. It means that the bearer of that name has found (or at least is sincerely endeavouring to find) 'Ananda' or Bliss within himself, in his own Self. Well, to such a man, no external forces ever matter. Even if he is beaten with a shoe, he will only smile: for he has dissociated himself from the body, and the inner Ananda is ever there.

'But, the other day, you lost your temper at a man calling you with an insulting word. Even supposing he called you 'donkey', did you at once develop four legs and a tail and did you become a donkey actually? It was a mere sound. You should have merely smiled at it and ignored it. It does not matter. Past is past. In future at least, you should be careful. Watch the mind. If you lost your temper 100 times last year, if you lose your temper fifty times this year, it is a great improvement. Perfection is not attained in a day. Always

reflect on the significance of the 'Ananda' suffix and the principles of Sadhu-hood.'

The incident occurred almost a month ago. Siva kept studiously silent and did not open the topic at all with either party in the fray. He made both feel quite at home and gave them to understand that he had not even noticed the quarrel. A lesson he had to teach: but he would not do so while the emotions were in a surging state. He let a month pass, gave both parties sufficient time to cool down and forget all about it: then quietly comes up with his instructions. Look at this great considerateness even towards erring souls. Siva has, I should say, excelled Lord Jesus who admonished Magdalene on the spot.

9th JUNE, 1949

YOUTH: TAKE NOTE!

A letter has been received from Sri N. Subramanian Unni of Srivandrum. Sri Unni says:

My prostrations at thine feet. Having come to know of the Divine Life Society and Swamiji Maharaj, through the local branch of the D.L. Society, I feel myself blessed from that moment and I hope to be lifted up from the ocean of Samsara by Swamiji Maharaj. My eyes are now opened and I realise how I have practically wasted my 64 years of life. I am now very anxious to turn a new leaf and taking refuge at thy feet, hope to be saved and taken to the goal in this very birth itself."

After reading this letter aloud, Siva remarked:

This is a very sincere man. Look at the genuine repentance he has given expression to in the letter. Even this does not happen to most of the people today who lead a sensuous life right to the grave. They waste their entire life: and it will be a long time before they are granted a human birth again.

'Wiser is the man who perceives the dangers of old age, death and transmigration while his senses are vigorous and he enjoys the bloom of youth. Repentance in old age does not take one very far. It is better, therefore, that youth is trained to look at life from the right angle and to take note of the fleeting nature of the pleasures of youth. One should take to the spiritual path while one is young. He is a Dheera. He will attain Jivanmukti if he follows the precepts of his Guru and applies himself, heart and soul to his Sadhana. And, in youth, this steady and tenacious application to Sadhana is easy."

Incidentally, look at the marvellous work that some of the Society's branches are doing. They are the rays of this resplendent Sun of Wisdom-Siva-and wherever they are, they dispel the gloom of ignorance and open peoples' eyes.

LISTEN: ENJOY: LEARN!

No strained silence, not a stiff posture, not an awe- inspiring presence, but a love-inspiring smile, not a dreary discourse, but sweet music spiced with humour-who will not like to learn at Siva's feet?

The Secretary of the Notified Area Committee had come with some of his friends-a doctor, a professor, etc. Tea was served. And, Siva took up a copy of his 'Vedanta Jyoti' and began to sing in his

thrilling voice, a few poems, here and there. Over a cup of tea they listened.

There is none of the artificial atmosphere that prevails elsewhere on such occasions: this nerve-racking business is not suited to the modern man. The student sits on a chair, on a level with the Master. He is enabled to feel that he is the Master's equal: the Bhava that Lord Krishna encouraged in Arjuna and Uddhava. In this familiar pose, the heart and the mind of the student is wide open. There are no reservations. No formalities. The lesson goes right in and digs itself into the very inmost cavity of the heart.

A song containing very serious philosophy, some important item of Sadhana...the student listens, all attention and serene. It is not continued: for, again, the student will lose the lively-interest and will get moody. At once, a humorous poem is taken up. The student roars with laughter. In that merry moment, the lesson slips in.

At the end of this most novel discourse, the Master presents a copy of the book to the student; and he promises to read it again and again.

Dr. B.L. Atreya, Head of the Department of Philosophy in the Banaras Hindu University, had come day before yesterday: and he, too, liked this discourse immensely.

10th JUNE, 1949

DOCTOR WANTS MOKSHA

An aged doctor was conversing with Siva in the office. His problem was: 'How to attain Moksha?'

'Moksha for a doctor is very easy,' said Siva, and the doctor was amazed at this bold assurance. 'Renounce the desire to earn wealth. Desist from accepting money from poor patients. Never extract money from anyone. Have the pure motive of serving the Lord in the sick and the suffering. Reflect. Meditate. Find out the defects in the mind. Root out the subtle hankerings after pleasure, for they goad you to place this service on a mercenary basis.

You can do this Seva more effectively if you renounce the world and join some good religious institution. Start a dispensary or a hospital as a part of this institution and begin serving the poor and the suffering. Always have Narayana-Bhava. Greet every patient as Lord Narayana Himself come to give you an opportunity to purify the heart. Take genuine interest in the patient's recovery. After the service is over, say: 'Brahmarpanamastu, and dedicate the actions and their fruits to the Lord as your worship. You will attain Moksha very quickly.'

The doctor bowed in great reverence, determined to put every bit of Siva's instructions into practice.

Oh Doctors! Read Siva's biographies. He was also a doctor, much as you are today. Find out for yourself through a deep study of his life what the features were that distinguished him from you all and opened out for him the gateway to God-realisation. Follow him. And, attain the blissful pinnacle of glory where he stands today.

11th JUNE, 1949

FOR THE GODS TO HEAR

Evening Satsang today was held on the verandah of Ramashrama Library. Siva began the Kirtan in his own characteristic way, with Ganesha, Saraswati and Guru Dhwanis. Then some of Siva's disciples sang choice Dhwanis. Later, the Vairagis followed with their various musical instruments. Then the ladies.

Everyone was athirst for more and more from Siva himself. Many Kirtans flowed like sweet nectar from Siva's lips. When he began Jaya Siya Ram Jaya Jaya Siya Ram', the Vairagis automatically began to sound their cymbals and beat the drum. Quickly Siva stopped them, with the remark: 'Please don't beat the drum now. My Kirtan is a simple one: like the simple khitchadie.'

(Khitchadie is a north Indian preparation of rice, dhall and vegetables,-a simple but highly energising food.)

Siva's Kirtan is of the Dhyana type. Siva always emphasises that the Sadhaka should merge himself in the Lord within while he does Kirtan: and musical instruments are often a hindrance to it, as they distract the mind towards them. Nevertheless, Siva does recognise the utility of these instruments for certain temperaments of devotees and on certain occasions (like Akhanda Kirtan continued throughout the night).

Then Siva led the chanting in chorus of the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, with the preface: Today is the birthday of Devender, son of Lala Baij Nathji. Let us, therefore, repeat the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra for the health and long life of the boy. This Mantra is truly a Mantra-raja: it bestows on us health, long life and prosperity, and also Moksha in the end. It is a very powerful Mantra. It drives away death, disease and misfortunes. When you repeat the Mantra

mentally, pray to the Almighty 'May Devender be blessed with health and long life! May Your blessings be showered on him, on the entire family, on us all and on the whole world.'

Mark Siva's attitude. Man prays for himself: saints pray for all. He himself is included in the 'all'; and, at the same time, the Bhavana enables him to realise that he is the All. Such prayer has a miraculous effect: it achieves the dual-purpose instantly.

The Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra was followed by Samashti-Kirtan of 'Sita Ram Ram Ram', 'Jaya Jaya Radhe Govind', 'Vitthala Vitthala Jaya Jaya Vitthala', and Rama Nama Jaya Kirtan.

Then Siva said: 'I will now say LONG LIVE. You will all respond with DEVENDER. In the loudest tone possible, so that the sound will be heard throughout the fourteen worlds; so that all the gods of the universe might hear and obey."

The entire audience obeyed!

The grateful parents and the boy himself joyfully touched the lotus feet of Siva with the crown of their head.

13th JUNE, 1949

JIVA AND ISHWARA, BOTH ARE ILLUSORY

Here is a patient who suffers from blood-poisoning: the virus of a pseudo Guru has entered his blood!' Siva handed a letter from a good devotee of the Lord, very fond of doing Japa, and of other devotional practices.

He had fallen a victim to the preachings of the modern pseudo-Gurus. He is bewildered because some preacher has told him that the Ishwara whom he is worshipping is also an illusory object, a product of delusion.

Yet, the sincerity of the Sadhaka is to be admired. For, at once he writes to Siva for final clarification. He has a taste for Japa and cannot give it up.

Jiva and Ishwara may both be within the pale of Maya. But, Ishwara is Suddha Satwa. The entire creation is within Him. He pervades the entire universe. He is verily Brahman Himself! They are deluded who speak of Ishwara in derisive terms and who decry worship of Ishwara. What is more: Ishwara can give Krama-Mukti. A worshipper of the Form of the Lord attains Sayujya with that Form, and eventually attains liberation. The mind will not all at once be able to grasp the Formless. It needs a prop in the beginning. Therefore, worship of a Form and repetition of the Name are most essential. Later on that Ishwara Himself will lead the aspirant to the meditation on the Formless Absolute. What can Ishwara not do? This pseudo-Guru thinks that Ishwara, too, is in ignorance even as he himself is. What a pity! Aspirants should beware of such pseudo-Gurus and avoid them as they would avoid venomous cobras.'

14th JUNE, 1949

GLORY OF SIVA'S PROXIMITY

Swargashram Vaidji, living on the top floor of the same building in which Siva lives, has passed away. He had a virulent attack of small pox which took his life. The passing away was peaceful. A

householder's body is generally cremated. But this noble soul had his consigned to Mother Ganga, in the fashion of Sannyasins. What a great honour! No other form of end would have earned him this merit. Surely, in his case, the smallpox was a blessing in disguise. People dying in distant parts of the country are blessed by their ashes being immersed in Ganga. Vaidji, however, had his body itself consigned to the holy river. No wonder: he had lived in close proximity to Siva's lotus feet for the past nearly 15 years. He led the life of a householder: yet, the very act of living near such an illumined soul earned for him at the last moment the honour of a Sannyasin's end.

THE GREAT MYSTERY

As we bowed to Siva on his entering the office in the morning, he asked: 'Did you know about Vaidji's departure?'

'Yes, Swamiji: the vaccinator will be here just now, Swamiji. It is better for Swamiji also to get himself vaccinated.' 'Oh, no: it won't come.

'Swamiji, it seems that Vaidji treated a small-pox patient recently. He must have caught the infection then.' That is only a Nimitta. Why did it not spread to others also? It had to be like that. How did I have scabies? When a man has a sudden attack of typhoid, how do you account for it? These infections spreading, etc., are only Nimittas.

The truth about it is a great mystery.'

Gahana Karmano Gatih

Siva himself once carried a small-pox patient on his own shoulders to the hospital. A cholera patient's bedside was Siva's abode for some time during the Swarg Ashram days of the sage. Even now nothing could prevail on him to shift his abode for even a temporary period from his Kutir which was directly below the small-pox patient's residence. Why: we could not persuade him to take his daily bath in the Viswanath Ghat, a little ahead of the place near his Kutir, near which the patient's clothes were daily washed by his family. 'Abhayam' is the saint's nature. He has conquered death. Even the dissolution of his body depends on his own will.

LEPROSY TO VEDANTA

Sri B. Ganguly, Leprosy Relief Officer of the UP., and Sri B.M. Nautiyal, Medical Officer of Health in the Tehri State, have both come to Siva to seek his help in connection with the leprosy relief work that they wish to undertake in Rishikesh. G. was struggling to express the inexpressible feeling of gratitude that filled his heart for the spontaneous and deep interest Siva had taken by personally visiting the leper colony, collecting detailed statistics and forwarding them to him, the Tehri Health Minister, Rev. Taylor, etc.

To tell you the truth, Swamiji, last time we came here, it was just because Dr. Gairola asked us to see you and I, too, had a soft corner for Sannyasins in general. But I was overwhelmed by the spirit of co-operation and ready assistance that I saw in you. You have rendered to me and to the nation at large more help in this work than I could dream of.. And, I shall not forget that it was in addition to the multifarious activities you are carrying on here.'

Then the official discussion started. Siva appreciated the government's scheme and himself suggested several sites for the proposed construction of a pucca government colony for leprosy patients.

Then Siva entertained them to tea.

'Here is some good food for you both,' said Siva: and the doctors turned towards Siva. At once Siva began to sing for them several poems from his 'Vedanta Jyoti'. The doctors liked these poems so much that they, too, were inspired to use medical-metaphors for Vedantic thoughts.

'Swamiji, we came to seek your help in connection with the leprosy relief scheme. But, it looks as though you will infect us with this Vedantic virus.'

The other doctor remarked: 'Every pore of Swamiji's body is constantly emitting powerful Vedantic-bacteria which at once attack anyone who comes near him, however robust in health he might be."

When Siva mentioned to Dr. Ganguly that one J.C. Chatterjee, a Professor of Philosophy, intended to settle down in Swarg Ashram, and asked if G. had known him or studied his works, the doctor humbly put in that since his life mostly centred around villages and as his work took away most of his time, he did not have much time to read books and keep himself abreast of the times.

That is much better. For, you will later have to forget all that you learn now. The only knowledge worth acquiring is Atma Jnana. And, for this you need read only Vedantic texts.

15th JUNE, 1949

DELAYED ACTION 'BOMBS

These bombs will not explode immediately when they come into contact with the earth, but would wait and explode at a later hour, when the people least expect it.

Siva also uses, in his ceaseless battle with the forces of Ajnana, all the modern devices to carry the battle to a successful termination. For instance, when the news of the atomic bomb was brought to him, he at once invented his Atmic Bomb of infinitely greater power. 'An atomic bomb can only destroy a city: but the Atmic Bomb will destroy the three worlds, it will pull down the citadel of ignorance', he wrote.

Similarly, he has the delayed action bomb also. Read the letter reproduced below:

Sri Swamiji Maharaj, I had been to Ananda Kutir in May 1947 and had the good luck of your Darshan and some Prasad. At that time, I got your book 'Yoga in Daily Life'. Soon after I was transferred from Rishikesh and then, somehow or other, I could not go through the book. Now I have studied it thoroughly and am very much impressed by its teachings. I now desire to have a deeper knowledge of the subject.

There is some indication of a correspondence course in one of the letters published in the said book. Please let me know all about it.

Please also tell me as to how I can become a member of the Divine Life Society. In my heart of hearts, I have acknowledged your pious

self as my honoured Guru. I hope you will kindly favour me with your valuable advice at this moment as also in the future. Dr. T.N. Mathur

The above letter is an effective answer to some people who criticise Siva that he indiscriminately preaches, throws away his books into the hands of unworthy persons, and indiscriminately initiates young men into Sannyasa. This betrays only impudence. Siva's knowledge is cosmic: we are short-sighted. His vision pierces the veil of time and the most distant future is the Present to him. You and I cannot even appraise the present! Bow to the dust of his feet. Follow him. Raise not a word against him.

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

To Siva, every name, every address, wherever he finds it, is all-important. Behind every name, there is the Nameless. Every name is in delusion waiting to be awakened to its Nameless Swaroopa. As has been hinted at elsewhere in this volume, Siva's address book is his treasure: read this letter received today:

Revered Swamiji,

Yesterday I received the autographed copies of your books. The gift was extremely unexpected. That, however, adds to the sweetness of the gift and the large-hearted kindness of the donor. I pray I shall prove worthy of the present.

The world has heard about you and your teachings. I am not known to you. I wonder to what I owe this kindness from you. How did I catch your notice? Possibly, it is my signature in the letter

sanctioning paper for the Jubilee number of "The Divine Life'. - P.V.S. Sarma

The letter beautifully takes you on the horns of the dilemma on which the writer sits bewildered. Have you ever found yourself in such a condition of mind? It is an oppressing joy, a blissful misery, and a thrilling depression. The man feels like bursting into tears of joy.

This I call Siva's magic. Quietly a couple of books slip through his hands. The postman delivers them to the addressee. We cannot fathom the mind of the sender. But we see evidence of the intensity of the sender's Sankalpa when we come to the receiver. His very heart is stirred. He at once finds himself in an entirely different realm altogether. Thus is sometimes an aspirant awakened. That is what they call the Spiritual Touch that Awakens.

22nd JUNE, 1949

DR. J.C. CHATTERJEE

Dr. J.C. Chatterjee, a learned professor of philosophy, who had, for several years, made America his home, preaching philosophy there, has come to have Siva's Darshan. After the preliminary greetings, Siva had the Museum shown and explained to the doctor. C. greatly admired the Museum. He came back to the office. Siva whispered into a Sadhaka's ear: 'coffee'. The old man caught the idea! 'No, no: don't bother now.'

'It is all right, Maharaj: just give me this last chance, please!....'

'All right, all right,' smiled the 78-year-old professor: You are an incorrigible!' Such a compelling hospitality the professor had enjoyed during his previous visit to the Ashram, too.

Coffee was brought. Along with it, a couple of sweet-dishes, biscuits and fruits.

'What a dinner you are giving me! All right: since you have said that it is your last chance.'

'Last chance? Yes: I meant last chance for the day!'

Side-splitting laughter among all those assembled: and in uncontrollable mirth, the old man even spilt a little coffee.

I do not know how you have been able to do so much work. You have truly done a tremendous lot of work. The innumerable books....the Ashram....the Mandir. Really marvelous! I have been wanting to go round the Ashram since I came here last: but something or other has always stood in the way. My admiration has considerably grown now that I have actually seen the fruits of your stupendous endeavours.'

'No, no, no. I have done nothing,' said Siva and became silent.

Siva has described himself as a Mahabhogi, Mahayogi and Mahatyagi. To do such a lot of work which has earned the appreciation of countless leaders in the world and which has raised countless children of the Lord to heights undreamt of by them, and then to proclaim: I have done nothing', is an astounding feat which is possible only for the Mahatyagi strictly adhering to the precepts of Lord Krishna in the Gita.

What has an uneducated, imbecile, and worthless man to renounce? And, is it not ironical if he repeats parrot-like: I am Akarta, Abhokta?? A Sadhu enters Rishikesh 25 years ago with nothing but a multi-pieced rag: serves everyone he comes across without any selfish motive whatsoever: shuts himself up in his room for days together living on dry bread and water-if he rises to world eminence, sits on the summit of a sky-scraper, every brick of which was laid by him with the sweat of his brow, and says: I have done nothing',....know that such a person is the Living Bhagavad Gita and the Living Vedanta.

Coming down to business, C. said: 'Swamiji: I want your help. We must conquer Russia, for Communism today threatens to wipe out all noble culture from the East: You alone can help.'

'Why: even though you say you are aged, I see in you the spirit of youth. You have already conquered America. Russia is child's play for you. You are J. C. Chatterjee, aren't you? Jesus Christ Chatterjee! What! And, make your conquests."

The Doctor was completely taken aback by this remark, and said: 'Swamiji, how do you know that? I used to initial some papers in America J.C.C. and say that they signified Jesus Christ Come'. How strange that you should have said the very same thing!'

Small wonder: what can be hidden from one in whom the rivers Past and Future have drained themselves out in the ocean of the Eternal Present, and in whom the walls that separate 'here' and 'there' have been pulled down revealing at one glance the All?

The Doctor continued: "You are specially suited to the work of capturing Russia, For, you are a very powerful magnet that has attracted these iron-filings of young fellows. I see bright, very hardworking, brilliant young men.....(He turned round and saw that one or two of us were watching).....No, no: I should not say that in their hearing. Young man! What I am telling Swamiji is not for your ears. You are all very wicked young men with no brains at all!....(and added in a low tone to Siva).....otherwise, these young fellows will get puffed up with pride. Now, as I said, you, with these young disciples, are the only fit person to conquer Russia.'

'When you start the University here, Doctor Saheb, you will get plenty of young men of talents. I am your grandson. I will always be ready to serve you. I have only a few geniuses here. Omkaranandaji....that is a brilliant poet. He is my right hand. He is very young. But a real genius! He is a journalist, a brilliant writer. And, a fluent orator, too. This young man, too, is a very good writer. He renounced a high position in the government of India. Swami Chidanandaji who explained the Museum to you is another eminent writer and lecturer. He is a saintly person with a magnanimous, kind and generous heart.....' and so on, Siva went on describing his disciples to the Doctor.

Do you see the difference? The human being sees human beings in others, susceptible to all human weaknesses, e.g. pride, egoism etc. The Doctor is a great man, but a human being. Not so, with Siva. He is divine. Only divine virtues are apparent to him. He sees divinity in all. He rejoices in glorifying others. What a spirit he thus infuses in everyone: and how miraculously his words awaken the hidden powers in the young folks!

The Doctor was about to leave. He had collected all the biographies written by various scholars and Yogis, on the life of Siva.

I do not know what to say of you. Your name itself has a great significance. But, I would slightly alter it and say, you are Sevananda. Because, you take such a great joy in serving others. You are a great magnet, too. Magnet-Sevananda.'

23rd JUNE, 1949

LANGOT BANDHA or KOWPEEN MUDRA

Perhaps you have never heard of these two-one a Bandha and the other a Mudra.

They have been evolved by sage Siva at the Ananda Kutir Yoga-Vedanta Forest Research Laboratory.

An aged gentleman came into Siva's office this afternoon. He explained to Siva how, even though he had a desire to visit the Ashram for a number of years past, he was unable to do so because he could not get leave. We all looked up in wonder: this old man has still not retired?

Siva asked the question. And, he replied: 'Swamiji, what to do? I have to protect fifteen children and my wife. 8 sons and 7 daughters. All my life I have spent rearing up these, one by one. Therefore, even after retirement I have had to take a job.'

'You have never practised Langot-Bandha, I think.'

'No, Swamiji. And, I have never heard of the name so far. Please explain it to me.'

'Nor Kaupeen Mudra?'

'No, Swamiji.'

'Obviously not: if you had, you would have saved this worry in old age. Langot Bandha and Kaupeen Mudra differ only in minor details. Essentially they are the same. They mean observance of physical celibacy.'

A cough-like laughter from the old man during which he exhibited the few lucky remains of what were once rows of teeth.

This Bandha and this Mudra have thousands of uses, and many varieties, too. Grosser the variety, grosser the use also. But, even the grossest form-a mere physical observance of Brahmacharya, has great utility. It will save many families from starvation, help to reduce the dowry-burden from the head of fathers of girls, and the school-fees budgets of many a young man.

The subtler forms have infinite uses. When this Langot Bandha is taken to the mental sphere also, then the practitioner's brain-power increases, intellect is sharpened, and intuitive perception developed, too. When this Langot Bandha becomes man's nature itself, then the Kingdom of God is opened to him and he becomes soon a great sage. Even the Upanishads and the Gita have sung the glory of this Bandha and this Mudra.

Therefore, practise this."

26th JUNE, 1949

DISCOURSE ON PRANA

Dr....., M.A., Ph.D., was Siva's guest this morning. They sat in the office discussing Yoga. Each admired the other's conquest of old age and the youthful energy with which they worked. The doctor was astonished to find that Siva, in spite of his age, was extremely busy throughout the day, from 3 in the morning till late at night.

The discussion went on to Creation, Maya and Samadhi.

Siva said: 'Man is maintained as an individual through the force of Vasanas which keep the Prana in motion. Vasanas agitate Prana! and Prana maintains the body with its senses. These Vasanas are stored up in the mind from time immemorial. The grossest form of Prana is the breath.

Subtler is the elemental Prana. Still more subtle is the Cosmic Prana which is termed Hiranyagarbha. It is from this Cosmic Prana that everything has emanated.

'Now you have understood the intimate connection between Prana and the mind (Vasanas). One depends for its function on the other. Therefore, if you learn to control Prana, you can control the mind, through Pranayama. When you still the Prana and when it ceases to oscillate, Samadhi supervenes. All Vasanas are fried in toto: you achieve Moksha.

The Upanishads speak highly about Prana whose subtlest form is Hiranyagarbha. By worshipping Prana as Brahman, they say, you can live a full life of a hundred years. You can do a lot of selfless service and practise much Sadhana if you have thus a long life. The Isavasya Upanishad also exhorts us to live the full span of a hundred years, doing the enjoined works. OM.'

'Swamiji Maharaj, during all my life, I have never spent such a fruitful hour as I have in your holiness' presence. I have learnt during these few minutes more than I have in all the rest of my life. By your Ashirvad, I do hope to be a useful citizen and a good Sadhaka. Namaskar.'

AN ETERNAL STUDENT: NO DISGUST!

Swami Keshavananda, disciple of the late Sri Swami Pranavanandaji, has been here for some time and tonight, the entire evening Satsang programme was his item -exhibition of lantern slides depicting some important topics in the Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, etc. Siva had already witnessed the slides. Yet, he was the one member in the audience tonight who was most interested in the item. After the Satsang had come to an end, the gathering had dispersed, leaving on the verandah of Siva's Kutir, only Sastriji and another inmate of the Ashram, besides K. and Siva himself. There was a discussion on the slides.

'Swamiji, it has a mass appeal. Women and children would like it very much. This has a greater attraction for the layman than mere intellectual discourses. Children would witness it any number of times without getting bored.'

1, too,' said Siva. 'I have already seen this. But, I can see it daily and listen to Swamiji's explanations daily. Not only the slides: even ordinary discourses, talks, lectures and Kathas I can go on listening to any number of times. I never feel disgust. Every time, I will try to find out new points and learn new lessons.'

In this, is wisdom: in this, is Brahma Jnana.

NEVER LOSE AN OPPORTUNITY

Over a cup of milk and fruits, K. was talking to Siva. Siva, after admiring the marvellous idea of the magic lantern show, said: 'It is a brilliant idea you have evolved: that of tapping the ground with the walking stick for the purpose of asking the assistant to change the slide. Why not say OM instead? As soon as you have done with a slide, say OM and he will change.'

I am grateful to your Holiness, Swamiji, for this suggestion. I shall certainly put it into practice. It is wonderful. Every change of slide would provide me with a repetition of the Pranava.'

TREAT EVERYONE AS YOUR SELF!

You should have two disciples who should travel with you. Then you can do this work more efficiently. You will not have to bother about arranging them, and to instruct novices each time.'

'Swamiji: I have tried that also. But these youngsters nowadays are more intent on exploiting and cheating than on genuinely serving and evolving. I have been cheated several times by poeple who wanted to become my disciples.'

You should conquer them by love. You should treat them as your own Self. You should give them greater comforts than you enjoy yourself. Mahants nowadays quietly enjoy all sorts of comforts, eat all sorts of delicacies, and deny them to their disciples. The latter soon get disgusted and they leave the Master.'

This is precisely how Siva has conquered the hearts of his disciples. Sri Swami Swarupanandaji once told me that when Siva was on his

lecture tours, he would go on lecturing and singing Kirtans for hours together, and when the organisers of the function provided him with a cup of milk, a little curd or ghee or some fruits, he would quietly pass on most of it to his associates then (Swami Swarupanandaji and Swami Atmanandaji). Even today, it is the common experience of all those who bring 'offerings' to Siva: they are often bewildered, for the very things that they consider extraordinary and meant only for Siva himself, he would immediately pass on with a smile to his 'children' at the Ashram, and later explain to the offering devotee that it is all the same.

In this connection, what K. himself, when he had received from Siva a Prasad of Rs. 20 offered with great devotion, love and recitation of Santi Mantras by Siva himself, said, is significant:

'Why does he give me this money? I never expected it. Nor could I ever think of asking him.. He has set an example to me. We should all be like him and develop our heart to such an extent. Swamiji has no need to do all this. He has achieved whatever there is for a man to achieve. But, even as Lord Krishna has said in the Gita, he does things only with a view to setting an example for others to follow.'

27th JUNE, 1949

SAMSKARAS: ASSOCIATION OF THOUGHTS: DISCIPLINE

Morning University class again provided Siva with an opportunity for Upadesha. The Panchadasi study was over. One or two people in the group quietly left the class. They were not obviously interested in the next item-Hindi. Thanks to this unwise act, they benefited themselves, benefited all of us, too. For....

Siva called them and said: 'Understand the law of Samskaras well. You may not now be interested in Hindi. You may think: What is the use, I do not understand anything. But, even a mere hearing of the words repeatedly will produce indelible impressions in the mind, listen to this story.

There was a maid-servant in the house of a Hebrew priest. As she went on doing the household work, she would listen to the priest's scriptural recitations. She understood nothing, not even the words. Years later, she developed a double personality. When she lost her senses due to illness, she began unconsciously to recite the Hebrew prayers. The doctors were astonished. But, when she regained consciousness, she said she understood nothing of those same verses. These were recorded in her subconscious mind. They will manifest themselves in due course of time. Nothing is really lost.

'Some others I have noticed, do not like Panchadasi and so do not attend that period. It is a sad mistake. Even if they do not grasp the meaning now, the hearing has its own effect: in due course, the meaning will flash itself upon their conscious mind.

'Further, even if I do not quite follow the Hindi passages, to me, the period has its own uses. I learn some words. Besides, whenever I come across some passages like The fool prattles', etc., at once all thoughts associated with 'fool' and 'prattling' will arise in the mind. Even the case of certain fools who imagine themselves very wise but would declare This world is very real. I can prove it through scientific explanations' comes to the mind. The mind is properly exercised. A new spiritual groove is formed. The intellect sharpened

and made very subtle. It always tries to spiritualise all topics. It associates all things and thoughts with spiritual matters.

'Another equally important consideration is-discipline. Coming and going whenever you like disturbs the class. You set a bad example. If all people begin to do like this, then the class cannot go on. You must observe discipline in all such gatherings. Form the habit from now.

'Sri Krishna Prem (Mr. Nixon) would sometimes not attend Nagar Kirtans which were usually long and tedious and involved much physical strain. When I would ask him 'Why did you not come', he would reply 'Swamiji, i was not feeling well: and if I came, I should stay till the end and go round the entire city-that would not be possible, so, I preferred to stay away.' Look at his sense of discipline. Discipline is very important in spiritual life. Even the gods observe discipline. Ishwara also binds Himself by his own discipline. He could give Mukti to all in a minute. He could change the course of the world in the twinkling of an eye. All Eternal Laws are based on Him only. Yet, He subjects Himself to the Laws.'

28th JUNE, 1949

AMERICAN PROFESSOR MEETS SIVA

Dr. Frederick Spiegelberg, Ph.D., an American Professor has come, accompanied by a Gujarati lady who has so long been a silent admirer of Siva.

The doctor explained his mission to India and said he had visited all the other Ashrams in the country.

Particularly he mentioned Anandashram, Kanhangad, of Sri Swami Ramdas.

'Swamiji, have you ever met Swami Ramdas?'

'No.'

'He has a very high regard for you. He spoke so highly of you and your attainments that I was all the time very eager to meet you personally.'

ONLY A SAINT KNOWS A SAINT

That brought to my mind a wonderful feature about Siva himself. His own disciples often behave in an unbecoming manner towards him. On the other hand, we find that renowned saints have very great veneration for him. Sri Yogi Shuddhananda Bharatiar, to have a glimpse of whose face, people have to wait long at his Kutir in Pondicherry (Now the head of Yoga Samaj, Madras) has written a thrilling biography of Siva. Sri Narayanadasa Paramahamsa, the gunny-Sadhu and great Mowni, who has declared that he has had direct Darshan of Bhagavan Narayana Himself, bows his head in veneration when Siva's name is mentioned in his (N.'s) presence. Sri Swami Ramdas, himself a renowned saint whose two books 'In Quest of God' and 'In the Vision of God' give a glimpse of his own realisation and high spiritual state, has this reverence towards Siva. Why, people all over the world, saints of great reputation have this veneration. Sri Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri. Ph. D., a renowned disciple of saint Dada Maharaj, and who is worshipped by his own English disciples as a great Master, has almost a chela-like veneration for Siva. Sri Boris Sacharow, an eminent Yogi of Russia, and Sri Louis

Brinkfort, another Yogi of Denmark-all have taken Siva as their revered Master. I can go on with this list ad infinitum.

Saints revere this saint: saints see God in this 'man'. And, ordinary people see man in this divinity. What a pity! Oh Lord, open our eyes. Give us the Divya Chakshu so that we might see Thy Real Form which these Yogis see in their own inner temple.

INDIAN SPIRITUALITY IS ALIVE IN ASHRAMS

At night, during the Satsang, Siva requested the doctor to speak a few words.

I have been deputed by my university in America to go round India and see if her ancient spiritual culture is still alive today. I have gone round: I have visited several Ashrams: I have contacted Government officials, too. I find that the spirit is still alive, very much so, in the Ashrams in India where, as in this, there is the living presence of a Master. It is a sad reflection to find that in the Government and public services, this spirit is almost nil, whereas in the West, you find greater traces of this spirit in those quarters.'

MY INNER RULER

'Venkatesanandaji, you will have to talk a few words,' came the command. Now? I felt diffident: with hardly a few minutes to think about, what to say! But after all, it is he who is going to do it.

Siva must have known the dilemma: for he began with a beautiful song 'Within you is hidden God!' and then followed it up with a few Vedantic songs. And while doing so, he had given me enough

material to talk. All that I had to do was to elaborate his definition of 'Divine Life' as given in this famous song.

THE PROFESSOR IS CHARMED

The Satsang came to a close at about 9.20 p.m. But it was hard for the Professor to take leave of Siva for the night.

'Swamiji, I have seen many saints in India during this tour. But, what I greatly admire in you is that you have not the slightest trace of an inferiority complex from which the others suffer. You are so outspoken: and you are so full of humour that you capture our hearts. Humour is a thing that is lacking in philosophers and saints too, very often. That spoils everything and makes it dry pedantry.'

'Swamiji,' I told the Professor, 'is a musician, dramatist, great humorist and dancer, too. You should see him dance. He is a fine actor: and he has dramatised the Upanishads. People who were unable to assimilate the Vedantic truths contained in them have got clear ideas from his Upanishad Drama which has been appreciated by our Governor-General also. He is full of humour.'

'Have you read my book: Philosophy in Humour?' asked Siva.

'No, I would very much like to.'

They resumed their seats. And, Siva began to sing a few poems from his book 'Philosophy in Humour'. The Professor and the Gujarati devotee were beside themselves in joy.

You ought to sing these songs in America: and you will revolutionise the entire country. People will be simply swept off their feet. America needs this kind of instruction: simple and

delicious. And, the way you sing these precious instructions! It is simply marvellous.'

They left at 11 p. m.

29th JUNE, 1949

YOGA MUSEUM: A GREAT IDEA

Early in the morning, Siva took the Professor round the Ashram.

The Yoga Museum, he was very much interested in. The entire set-up of the Museum was explained to the visitors. The doctor of philosophy closely followed the beautiful design of the Museum.

'Please give me a sample of this Japa-mala-bag. With that, I will start my own Museum in my University in America. This is a most wonderful idea.'

FIRST TIME I SEE ASANAS

Vishnuji demonstrated certain very difficult Asanas.

The Professor was all-admiration: and he took slide-photographs of many of these Asanas.

'Swamiji, I have heard and read so much about these Asanas and Kriyas. But this is the first time I actually see that a man can perform such difficult feats of Yogic Kriyas.'

ALL ROUND PERFECTION

The Professor was himself a good photographer. When Siva took him to the Sivananda Art Studio and showed him the modern equipment of Padmanabhan's studio and dark room, the Professor

remarked: This is the only Ashram with such perfect modern arrangements.'

'Is that so? Chitra Kala is one of the many Kalas: some others are music, dance, etc. They are all divine in their origin; and divine one should aspire to keep them. They are holy and inspiring if they are kept on the high pedestal of sublimity. One should be efficient in these: for they contain in them an Amsa of God.

Further, the photographic and painting arts keep for posterity a record of present-day events. It is a great help for generations to come.'

The Professor admired the purity of Siva's approach to the fine arts.

JULY, 1949

8th JULY, 1949

BETWEEN FASTING AND FEASTING

The sumptuous Birthdate Feast was over. This time, the glory of celebrating the Day goes to Sri S.R. Padayachie of South Africa, a very devoted Bhakta of Siva to whom it is attainment of Mukti to be of any service to Siva or to do anything that would conduce to the furtherance of the Mission.

The few visitors who were nowadays accustomed to the sight of the Ashram workers taking their roti and dhall in improvised towel bags' and vessel at noon, quietly walking in and out of the dining hall generally silent and solemn, were inwardly happy to find that today the hall had put on a festive appearance and was filled to overflowing with pious devotees and serene Sadhus taking a hearty meal of delicious preparations.

Master Satchidanandaji relieved the visitors' 'tension' and for a few blissful moments, there was a very pleasant exchange of views on this glorious being who presided over the destinies of Ananda Kutir.

Maharaj-ji,'began Satchidanandaji, 'What is this feast compared to what it was on the Diamond Jubilee Day or the recent Sadhana Week days? I remember now. Just before the Diamond Jubilee, when we were busy making preparations for the day, I was bringing from Rishikesh huge vessels for preparing food for the numberless devotees and Sadhus who were expected to take part in the function. The old Tehri Maharajah's car had got stuck on the way from Rishikesh. We all helped to restart it. When the Maharajah noticed

the cartload of big vessels being moved into his territory, he was astonished and asked me: Where are you taking these?' To Sri Swami Sivananda ji's Ashram', I replied. The Maharajah remarked: 'Only Swamiji is able to conduct poor feeding and Sadhu Bhojan on such a large scale nowadays when there is food scarcity everywhere. Really, Tapas has great Shakti.' All this is done by Swamiji by his mere Satsankalpa. It is all his play. In all these seven years I have lived here, I have silently watched, with amazement, the rapid growth of the institution. I have seen with my own eyes the desolate place, full of bushes and thick jungle get transformed into the beautiful Sivanandanagar. I have seen the postal bags to and fro Ananda Kutir grow in bulk. I have seen also the impoverished Ashram kitchen where one or two Sadhakas would, in silent joy, the joy of Seva, take their daily bread rapidly grow into an Annakshetra where hundreds have taken food to their heart's content every day.'

'Between these great festive days, the days of ease and comfort, and the other days of calm endurance of the taking of a few pieces of bread and a cup of dhall-there does not seem to be much of a great gulf of difference for them! We feel it sharply. But Siva and his young men take it so easily as though it was all a continuous feast.' The pious old devotee could not restrain his tears.

That is because,' came the reply from a youthful Sadhaka, 'Swamiji does not provide food only for their body. This is only a side-issue. You can't help it. The vehicle has got to be preserved, cleaned and 'oiled'. Swamiji's main aim is to provide a supmtuous feast for their soul. No finances can obstruct this. So, the feast is continuous. And, Swamiji's message reaches the farthest corners of the world. I heard it said by one of the senior officials of the Tehri State that once

when the late Maharajah had been to London, he paid a visit to the British Museum and asked for a good book on Yoga. The Librarian at once produced a volume of 'Practice of Yoga-by Swami Sivananda' 'By whom?' 'By Swami Sivananda' replied the Librarian, 'I see he lives in the Himalayas, perhaps within the boundaries of your Highness' 'state.' The Maharajah blushed with the proud realisation that his State's renown had spread to the Capital of the Empire (through the writings of a saint) long before his august personage could carry it there.'

'Oh yes, yes. That is the secret. You are right. When you shift the centre of your love from body to soul, you are continuously happy and contented. That is Swamiji's secret of achievement, too. Dry bread and Ganges water was nectar to him when people used to scramble into the Kshetra during Bhandara (feast) days, for he was intent on feeding his soul. Once a devotee gave him Rs. 5 for his milk: and he at once printed a pamphlet out of the amount.... himself carrying on with his dry bread and water. That was real Tapasya. No wonder, today the entire world is aware of his message.'

IN UNITY LIES STRENGTH

'Call such meetings of all the workers frequently. Make everyone feel that he is very essential for the running of the institution. Encourage everyone to think of the work. No one should feel that he is merely the fifth wheel to the coach. Everyone should be the head of his department. At the same time, everyone should be induced to take a living interest in the entire work. Appoint Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries to each department. And, this should never be allowed to become a mockery: that is the mistake often committed

by organisers who tend to make those whom they appoint to responsible positions nothing more than their puppets. Each office-bearer in the Society should have real power to control his department and to take a hand in the general affairs of the Society. Everyone should respect everyone else and so joyously contribute to the service of humanity.' concluded Siva when he was informed of the decision of a meeting in the evening, in pursuance of Siva's instructions, to discuss certain problems.

Succinctly, Siva, the master psychologist, has brought out a Sannyasin's approach to the problem of organisation. Trust everyone. Repose entire confidence in all. Suspect none. Suspicion kills enterprise and dulls enthusiasm. Faith and trust promote their growth. Again, a domineering attitude towards juniors makes them nervous and cripples their faculties. A spiritual camaraderie, a brotherhood of Sadhakas, without the obnoxious distinctions of function-born superiority and inferiority-that is the aim of Siva. He has all along preached (and emphasised it by his own example) that no one should regard anyone else as his or her inferior in any sense. A scavenger who removes the refuse on the road, a doctor who removes the refuse in the human system: a servant-boy who cleans the vessels in the kitchen and a philosopher who cleans the vessel of a Sadhaka's mind-all, to him, perform the Lord's work in their various capacities. All are equal. No work is superior; none inferior. The Jiva in everyone yearns to relieve itself of its vestments and feel its own Selfhood of All. This should be the attitude of all-Ministers, Prime Ministers, Presidents, Monarchs, Directors and all officers all over the world. Then only will there be real contentment everywhere....contentment is very essential to progress.

9th JULY, 1949

SIKH AMONG SIKHS

Sri Mam Raj of the Tehri State brought in the Government of India's Food Commissioner, a middle aged Sikh gentleman. As they were discussing the purpose of the Food Commissioner's visit, etc., and his visit to Srinagar that day, Siva quietly thrust into each one's hands a few of his books. It is common knowledge that he does not wait to listen through even the visitor's talk but simultaneously goes on autographing several books and passes them on. Siva never allows himself to procrastinate. And, he is an Ashtavadhani: so that he could do all things at the same time. He would be conversing with the visitor, giving directions to the Ashramites: and signing books-all at the same time and with equal attention and zeal.

Mam Raj described their adventures up and down Srinagar (a place about sixty miles towards Badrinath in the Himalayas, from Rishikesh.)

'Swamiji, it was raining. And, the roads were impassable. Mountains had started breaking down. We had a very risky ride. Once we almost tumbled into Ganges. It was only your grace and blessings that brought us here.

The Sikh accompanying the Food Commissioner was happy to see that in Siva's 'Lives of Saints', Guru Nanak's life had been included: and that in Siva's book 'World's Religions', Sikhism had found a succinct exposition. 'Maharaj, you have done for our religion what the leaders among Sikhs themselves ought to have done. You are the foremost among Sikhs.'

'It is all one! All religions speak of the One God. There is no difference on fundamentals. Only superficialities differ. We ought to ignore them and cease to quarrel with one another. The details and the ceremonies and the rituals are only for our own good. We should practise them and adhere to them. But, we should not make that the bone of contention and cause riots. Each man should follow his own religion, realising and appreciating the unity of the fundamental tenets of his religion with those of all others in the world.'

The Food Commissionerr, a devout Sikh, fell into a tranquil exposition of the tenets of his religion. As soon as he mentioned Kirtan as one of the fundamentals of Sikhism, Siva began:

Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Ji

Wahe Guru Wahe Guru WaheGuru Ji,

and the entire hall was resounding with the Kirtan Dhwani: immersing all in the Calm of the One God-Truth.

When he found that Kirtan had already found its master in Siva, the F.C. turned to Japji Saheb and found that there too.....

Japji the best pocket book of spiritual essence I have seen', exclaimed Siva. 'It is full of divine wisdom. In fact, it is out and out Upanishadic.'

Naturally, the F.C. fell to admiring Siva for his vast knowledge of Sikhism and then turned to quoting Guru Granth Saheb. At the very mention of the name, Siva began to recite the Mula Mantra which thrilled the Sikhs.

As soon as the recitation was over, Siva explained: 'You see, this Mula Mantra of the Sikhs contains the very essence of Hindu Upanishads and the core of the teachings of Lord Jesus or Lord Muhammad. All these great prophets of the world have had the same realisation of the Infinite God.'

When the F.C. came into Siva's presence and was entertained to tea, he had hardly expected that he, in whose presence he has had the privilege of sitting, was the He in whom all religions had their culmination. Siva's Kirtan, however, enraptured him. Siva's discourse on the unity of religions and the oneness of God appealed to him. But what followed perhaps had the effect of.....let's see.

It was raining outside. An old man (a Sindhi) tottered in soaked to the bones and his coat almost turned into a cotton-pulp. I was standing at the intervening door. 1 intended to make him wait in the D.J. Hall Annexe, to let him undress himself, etc. Hardly had he reached the door.... his shoes wet and heavy dropped off, and the man was in a semi-conscious state. 'Where is my Gurudev? Where is my Lord? Please show him to me. Please.... please....my dear. Where is he?' In silence, I bowed to his feet...what a flower of devotion to the Guru! And, led him in. In his hurry, he did not even choose to take off his cap. Perhaps nothing but Gurudev was in his mind. He fell on his knees. He hugged Siva's feet, embraced them, kissed them, took their dust and sprinkled them on his forehead and body. Folded palms, eyes half-closed, shedding tears of joy, he sat down in the attitude of devout prayer looking up to the face of Siva as one would look up to Him.

'Hey Bhagavan, you are my only Saviour! Please bless me. Turn your eye of grace towards me. I am a lowly wretched creature. Through your grace alone can I tread this path of righteousness. Show me the way.'

Siva turned to him. What passed then is neither for mortal eyes, nor for finite words...something that surpasseth understanding. After a few minutes like this, the old man bowed again and departed. Only then did he remember that he had not brought any offerings with him for Siva, the Sannyasin. As I was leading him to the door, he thrust a couple of rupees into my hand and said: 'Please get some fruits for this and place it at my Gurudev's feet.' I could understand the devotee's heart well enough: he had offered to Gurudev what best he could-his own heart full of faith and devotion-himself! What need hath his Lord for fruits and coins? When he turned to the world, he thought of its customs. It is just as well that he followed them, too.

The Sikh brethren were watching this with wonderment, bewilderment, perhaps with advantage. They were wise men. For a wise man, every incident, every situation abounds in lessons of the greatest moment. They could have compared notes: weighed in their own heart-balance the comparative gains of this old man full of humility and devotion and their own.

The F.C.'s words reflected the effect that this incident had on him. 'Swamiji, there is a saying in Granth Saheb: 'He who turns your mind towards God, either by his preaching, his conduct or by his mere presence, he is your real friend. He who turns your mind away from him is your real enemy. During the hour I have spent in your

august presence, I have felt greatly elevated, inspired and exalted. I have found inner peace and an inexpressible joy in your company. You are my true friend, and guide. Bless me that I may be true to my religion."

The other Sikh brother felt that this great opportunity of meeting perhaps the foremost saint in India today, should be well utilised: and he asked: Swamiji, how did this Maya arise in Brahman?

'Ask Brahman Himself!' was the crisp reply which sent all around into side-splitting laughter. Siva continued: This is Ati-Prasna or a transcendental question. You will find this question coming up to your mind in various forms: 'When did Karma begin? When and why was the world created? Why is there evil in the world? Why did the Unmanifest manifest itself? etc etc' The same question is asked by Rama in the Yoga Vasishta and Vasishta says: You are putting cart before the horse. You will not be benefited by an enquiry into this question at all. Meditate and realise Brahman. You will then know the answer to this question. The problem itself will have dissolved by then.' No one can answer this question. When Knowledge dawns, the question itself vanishes. Therefore, there is no answer to the question at all. Brahma Sutra says:

Lokavat tu Leela Kaivalyam

It is only to pacify your doubt. It is really not an answer: for there can be no answer. Yet, the question will arise in the case of every seeker after Truth. You cannot help it. You will have to use your discrimination, pacify the doubt, and then, through intense Sadhana and meditation, realise God. Then the doubt will vanish. A great Yogi and Jnani was worried with this doubt for twelve years. Then

he told me: The worry is over now. It troubled me for twelve years. I could not find an answer. So, I have given up that pursuit and have taken to meditation, Japa and Kirtan.

Now I find peace and progress.' Faith in Guru, Granth Saheb, Kirtan, Japa, meditation and practice of righteousness-these will enable you to progress in the spiritual path and will take you to That where there is no questioning possible.'

With bowed head and folded palms, the officers took leave of Siva profusely thanking him for the precious gifts of these books which shall be my greatest treasure hereafter' and for his inspiring Upadesh.

10th JULY, 1949

GURU POORNIMA SANNYASINS: CHOICEST GROUP

Very early in the morning, in Brahmamuhurtha, in the traditional fashion, out of the mortal sheaths of Sridhara Rao, Natesa Iyer, R.V. Sastri and Brahmachari Satchidananda, arose the effulgent immortal torch-bearers of wisdom, the spiritual children of Sivananda and the messengers of Siva's Wisdom-Chidananda, Brahma- nanda, Mounananda and Satchidananada. They shone in a lustre that at once gladdened the hearts of those who had the Darshan of the rising suns. At the very touch of the master, at a word of supreme wisdom from his lips, at the omnipotent Sankalpa of Lord Siva's universal heart.... their life-spark had burst into a conflagration of immortality, burning away at once the finite, little self clothed by the five sheaths, and limited by the phenomena. Sacred thread and tuft of hair consigned to the Ganges, they shone in garments

presented to them by Guru Siva as the four great Sanatkumaras in the presence of Dakshinamurthy. The shower of rain turned the barren landscape of Himalayas scorched by the heat of summer, into a rich bed of greenery. Ganga Matha roared along OM OM OM, blessing the children of Her Lord. The rising sun smiled, happy to witness the renunciation of the four great spiritual giants. The great Rishis and the Brahma Vidya Gurus who (naturally on the Guru Purnima day) joyously greeted the dawn of the day, were infinitely pleased that a Blessed Four had joined their group to carry the banner of Wisdom Service, Renunciation.

Siva beamed with joy. 'A select group,' he said. And, added: 'Kings, Prime Ministers and millionaires should come and embrace Sannyasa. They should stay here for some days: listen to Krishnanandaji's Vedanta lectures, do Akhanda Kirtan, listen to the chanting of the Rudram and Chamakam in the temple, take Bhiksha of roti and dhal from the kitchen, serve lepers at the dispensary and attend Satsang at night and there listen to the study of Upanishads, etc. One man's heart will soon be changed: he will embrace Sannyasa. Others will soon follow.'

Siva is a Prophet. His vision is not impaired by time or space. What he has said today, the most auspicious day of the year, will surely come to pass soon. India will be spiritually ruled by Sannyasins; very soon.

There is another significance. There is a real link between the first laconic expression and the second one. The Select Group who got themselves initiated today are indeed Kings, Premiers and leaders of men. Very soon they will lead the leaders, rule the kings, and will be

primates guiding premiers, at whose feet millionaires will shed their vanity of wealth and bow. Such is the glory of renunciation.

YOUR SPIRITUAL WORTH?

A very high dignitary has come. Siva seated him in the office, entertained him with sweets and tea, gave him some books and quietly left him and his party there and walked off, without even putting on his shoes and taking the umbrella. One would run about and dance around these people, for their material worth.

The very pious Pannalalji was waiting for Siva. He offered flowers devoutly at his feet, bathed his feet with Ganges water and collected this water in bottles, for his family. People watched the spectacle with great wonder.

Pannalalji's Gurudev is his God. He worships his picture. He repeats his name. His faith in Siva no one can excel. He is not very rich. But at a single mention of any of the Ashram needs, he would sacrifice his all to fulfil. He quietly whispered into my ears: 'Write to the Lahore Press. As soon as the book ALL ABOUT HINDUISM is ready, I shall pay for the entire consignment and take delivery. I have just now got some money, by Gurudev's grace. I shall spend it all on this book.' He is the man who increased his monthly donation to the Ashram when his salary was cut. And, he firmly believes that all his material prosperity and spiritual advance he owes to Siva's grace.

The great official party was proceeding towards the Ganges Ghat for a boat to cross the river. Siva asked them: 'Can you walk on the water?'

Meaning: renounce the vanity born of your high official position. Treat your servants and subordinates with more considerateness. You can command them to obey: but can you command the Ganga?

T.V. PURUSHOTTHAM

Yet, all millionaires are not arrogant, and to those who have a spiritual worth, Siva runs unasked. That is the sign of God. T.V. Purushottham, a millionaire of Madras, had expressed a desire to be initiated by Siva into the Ishta Mantra. He is old and is unable to walk. Siva arranged for the Puja in connection with the initiation to be done in P.'s own room in the Ashram. Siva, too, went to the Kutir in which P. was lodged and performed the Diksha. Look at this: Guru condescending to go to the disciple and initiating him. If you have a spiritual thirst, Siva is your own....and he is ever eager to serve you.

During the entire day hundreds of devotees prostrated before him and worshipped him. Siva, too, offered flowers to them and worshipped them always uttering 'Sahasra Sheersha Purushah'. This is Virat worship. This is the sign of a sage of Self-realisation. He sees That everywhere. To Siva, the entire world is his own Form. His own manifestation-the Virat.

12th JULY, 1949

WHO IS A SAINT?

We saw how Siva arranged for the Mantra Diksha of Sri T.V.P., the aged devotee, and himself went to the disciple's room to initiate him.

P. wanted to attend the night Satsang in Siva's Kutir. And, at night, he took a wearisome few steps from his Kutir to Siva's across the road, on two human crutches provided by Siva. He cannot sit on the ground. It is physically impossible. Siva noticed this and at once provided a chair for him, whereas he himself sat on the ground along with the other Satsangees. Siva is a strict disciplinarian and would sweetly and kindly train even Europeans to sit cross-legged whenever they happened to attend the Satsang. But, where the real need arises, the one supreme importance given to the fulfilment of the pious wish of the devotee swallows all other minor observances.

P. had almost reached the verandah where the Satsang is held with his shoes on before his son could remind him of the custom to leave the shoes at the threshold. P. tried to turn back, apologetically. Siva perceived the situation at once.

No, no. It is perfectly all right. Come on: sit down on this chair. You can have the shoes on. Why, all of us have this filthy 'shoe' all over the body and we take it with us wherever we go.'

P.'s tears of joy rained gratitude that filled his heart to overflowing.

As P. left the Kutir after the Satsang, he was filled with a strange sublime emotion, a queer revelation.

He said: This Swamiji is a real saint. I have never met the like of him ever before in my life, even though I have met great spiritually advanced persons. How kind he is! I had the idea that Swami X was a big saint. But, would he ever have taken all this trouble to initiate me in my own Kutir? Did he ever give me so many books and so freely, to read? Never has he shown such consideration for this

physical age and its incapacitations. Look at Swami Sivanandaji. He attends to my physical needs as though he is my own mother. He selects books for me and gives them to me for my study, free. He places a chair for me to sit while he sits on the ground. And, most of all, imagine the wit and wisdom with which he permitted me to enter the Satsang with shoes on. What a mine of wisdom he is! He compares the skin on our body, to the shoe. What a perfect simplicity of truth! How much Vairagya this one idea creates in our mind! People would give up adorning this skin and beautifying it with ornaments and cosmetics if they know how this man-of-God looks upon it: as a mere shoe. This man is a saint, no one else that breathes on this earth today. I can't compare Swami R...or for that matter anyone I have seen and I have seen quite a lot of them, with this child-like saint who is God Himself.'

20 JULY, 1949

SERVICE BESTOWS MOKSHA ON YOU

Srimathi Bhagavathi Devi, wife of Rai Saheb Ram Prasadji of Delhi, has 'donated' a well on the bank of the Ganges for the use of the population of Muni-ki-reti during the rainy season when Ganges-water gets too muddy to be used for drinking purposes. Sri Swami Sankaranandaji of Ram Ashram had sponsored the move and had supervised the construction work also. The well is now ready. Sri S. had arranged for a Kirtan to be held in the Ram Ashram last evening to celebrate the opening of the well for public use. Siva graced the function with his august presence, with his disciples. His inspiring Kirtan-Dhwanis thrilled everyone present.

This morning, Siva performed the actual opening ceremony of the well. He drew the first bucket of water with his own holy hands and distributed Prasad to those who had assembled there. During the course of this function, Siva said:

'Srimathi Bhagavathi Devi and Rai Saheb Ram Prasadji, as also Sri Swami Sankaranandaji have earned the gratitude of us all and of the people of the entire locality by this great humanitarian service. Now people will get crystal-clear water even during the rainy season. Diseases will be averted. They have earned the love of the Sadhus and pilgrims, too.

Service purifies the heart and makes it fit for the reception of divine light Not only that, service bestows Mukti on you. Service motivated by desires obtains heaven for you: and after the merits are exhausted in heavenly enjoyments, the Jiva returns again to this mortal earth to undergo pain and pleasure, and to strive for Moksha. Selfless service, on the other hand, releases the soul from transmigration. From here, the Jiva goes to Brahma Loka and there enjoys unending bliss. It attains Krama Mukti. At the end of the present Kalpa, the Jiva gets its final release or Moksha. There is no return to this mortal plane, to this world of pains and sorrows, to this burning hell-fire of Samsara, for the Nishkamya Karma Yogi. It is verily Moksha here and now: release from birth and death here and now. Therefore, serve selflessly and free yourself.

25th JULY, 1949

PATRIOTISM: FIRST STEP IN VEDANTA

The death anniversary of Suman, one of the foremost patriotic leaders of Tehri-Garhwal, was observed in Muni-ki-reti: and, as usual, the venue was the Ashram itself, and the chairman, the soul of Sivanandanagar, Siva himself.

Kirtan was conducted and there were a few speeches and songs in praise of the heroic Suman by men of the locality.

Siva's Pranava-Nada reached out to Suman in the other world and gladdened his heart. And, Siva said:

'Patriotism is the first step in the ladder of Vedanta. It is only when you annihilate narrow selfishness that you are fit to learn Vedantic Truths and to meditate on the Supreme Self. Zeal for service and emancipation of the nation expands the heart, kills the narrow selfish instinct, and in a way, attunes man to the Divine Will. The Lord's Will always brings good to the whole world. The patriot yearns for the good of the nation to which he belongs. Soon he will go beyond this, too, and yearn and work for the good of mankind, the entire creation: he will then have Liberation.

'One of the surest distinguishing marks of a Vedantin is his fearlessness, bravery, daring. So long as there is the least trace of selfishness, man cannot have fearlessness. When you realise that you represent a Cause and not any egoistic desire, you acquire the bravery which laughs at death. The Cause is not subject to the limitations to which this body is: the Cause survives this body: when you identify yourself with the Cause, you dissociate yourself with the body; there is conquest of death itself. Be you all brave and fearless like Suman, the hero whose anniversary of death we

observe today. Strive, strive every moment to become like him. You can.

'We pray for the peace of the departed soul of Suman who died a martyr's death, fighting for the cause of the nation's freedom. In reality, there is no need for this prayer. Suman has attained the Veera Swarga: no more is there a return for him. When selfish, egoistic desires have been annihilated, the Jiva does not have to transmigrate. From Veera Swarga or Brahma Loka, the Jiva will have Krama Mukti: there is no return to this world of joys and sorrows.

Therefore, this prayer-gathering is in reality intended to remind us all of Suman's life of complete dedication, and to inspire in you all that selflessness and that devotion which filled Suman.

You should also celebrate his birthday every year. You should organise his admirers and try to bring out a short biography of Suman's life. This will provide enduring incentive to the young men of all times to follow the footsteps of their leader.'

PERENNIAL ZEAL FROM WITHIN

A young Ashramite who was working hard and with great zeal had gradually grown melancholy and unwilling to work for want of enthusiasm; Siva heard of this and quickly remarked:

'How long can anyone buttress another's enthusiasm? Each worker will have to draw his own inspiration from within and keep the fire of his zeal ever alive and bright. We are all engaged in the service of humanity, in the practice of Karma Yoga. We serve ourselves through such service: we purify ourselves and we will attain

Moksha through service. If we grow Tamasic, no one except us ourselves would be the losers.

The work Sri X was doing will now be taken up by others. Work will go on. But his talents will get blunted out of disuse. I am ever ready to develop everyone's talents at any cost. I always encourage young people with talents and bring out their hidden talents. If you all lend yourselves to that treatment, then you will all become world famous. If you refuse to adapt yourselves to circumstances and adjust your ways and thus deprive yourselves of the opportunity to grow, then you can't blame anyone except yourselves for your stagnation.'

Inspiring words, these: coming as they do from one whose own life is a more eloquent illustration of this philosophy, they have a great force. We who live under the shelter of his lotus feet, in his protecting care, and his ever-appreciative heart, cannot even imagine that gigantic will that resolutely kept the flame of zeal for service of humanity alive in Siva during his Swarg Ashram days, especially, and that conquered every kind of privation and suffering and, after extracting their deadly teeth through Vichara and an abiding spiritual yearning, used their very hide for ascending to the summit of God-realisation.

AUGUST, 1949

5th AUGUST, 1949

ANANDA KUTIR: EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD

For.....said Sri Swami Satyatmanandaji of Tulsi Mutt, during his conversation with Siva on the Viswanath Ghat this evening:

You have captured here several Vibhutis of the Lord. He is Himalayas among mountains: you have Him here towering all round. You are living at His feet. He is Ganges among rivers: and here He is perennially flowing alongside the Ashram, and eternally humming the Pranava: and this Pranava is also He Himself. The blue expanse of the Akasa ever reminds us of the Infinite. The resplendent sun which is His Vibhuti shines in all His glory on the Ashram without any obstruction whatsoever: so does the Moon, another Vibhuti. You have installed Lord Vishnu and Sri Sankara in your temple and the Pratishtha of this temple you have performed in the divine month, Margasirsha. The temple of Siva is in the midst of a bael-forest where Siva loves to dwell. In the Ashram, there is a continuous Japa of the Maha Mantra-in that Japa Yajna, He is manifest. The crowning glory is that you have enshrined here the Adhyatma Vidya which is His manifestation: and from your Ashram issues a perennial current of wisdom of the highest kind. Tejas and Satwa shine on your countenance: the very rapidity with which the Ashram has grown indicates that you have Jaya (Victory) as a part of your being, the result of ceaseless endeavour which is also His aspect. Swamiji, you are silent. This Mouna, too, reminds me of His Vibhuti: you are a Jnani and your Jnana, too, is He Himself!

'All the Vibhutis of the Lord are here. See: even the perceptible Vibhutis are so many. Who knows how many subtle Vibhutis there are here? This indeed is the Eighth Wonder of the World.'

7th AUGUST, 1949

SECRET OF SUCCESS

A few of us were sitting on the floor of the D.J. Hall despatching Birthday invitations. Siva peeped in: and, as though on second thought, walked into the Hall and greeted us: Tat Twam Asi.'

We saluted him silently.

'How many have you despatched so far?'

Nearly a thousand, Swamiji.' This year, it has not been done scientifically!' This nearly startled us. The invitations should reach the people in the first week of the month. The ground should have been prepared previously, by the despatch of leaflets and pamphlets. The average householder is busy nowadays with his own bread-winning activities. He needs constant reminders, constant encouragements, and constant opportunities should be offered to him at his door for his evolution. We should not sit back on the chair and think: If he has a charitable temperament, let him find out ways and means.' No: we should voluntarily place before him opportunities of doing charity. And, that too in a scientific manner. If the invitations reach the people in the first week, many would avail themselves of the opportunity to perform charity. If it goes late, they might have spent the money and thus an opportunity would be lost.

'And, by this scientific approach, the institution also will grow. Why do we want the institution to grow? Not for our own glorification. But, for the service of humanity only. Such should be the attitude of everyone of you. Then you will take a greater interest in work: for, with the change of mental attitude, the work becomes a Sadhana and the surest way to purify yourself and attain Self-realisation.'

With the blessing, Siva left us to resume his work. After a few minutes, he came back with a few addressed copies of The Divine Life' and his 'Bible'-the huge book in which he notes down addresses of people and associations of every description.

'Please post this,' he gave the copies of the magazine. Here are some of the addresses on the wrappers, written in Siva's own hand:

1. The Rawal Saheb, Badrinath.

2. The Officer-in-charge, Free Dispensary, Badrinath.

3. The Post Master, Badrinath.

4. The Secretary, Badrinath Temple Committee, Badrinath.

5. Free Reading Room, Badrinath.

You and I will not do this. None of these people have asked for the Magazine: and there is no knowing whether such addresses exist at all. Especially the address The Officer-in-charge, Free Dispensary, Badrinath,' beat my intelligence.

This also, Swamiji?' I asked.

'Oh yes, yes: why? You suspect that there may not be any such person in Badrinath. I have a faint idea that there is a free dispensary

or some such thing for Yatris in Badrinath. But, don't worry about the exact name and all that. It must reach someone. And, that Some One will be benefited.'

Siva has lived up to this precept - to the very letter and spirit. Recently a stranger walked into the Ashram, stayed there for a couple of days and requested Siva's permission to despatch a few hundred packets of books, etc., to high officials, Ministers, businessmen and Ambassadors. I had known a few of these 'great' personalities: and I was sure that most of them will not look at spiritual books. Yet, the visitor was boisterous in his enthusiasm: and Siva was even more! When it was announced that nearly Rs. 800 worth of books had been sent free, Siva's face showed supreme satisfaction. Here was an opportunity of sending a book free to one man (some man), one prospective Sadhaka (in this birth or the next!), and Siva would never let it slip. Money? It will come. Books? No, they never go waste: someone must read them: and we will bring out new editions! When such is the attitude, I think failure would flee before his undertakings.

WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL SADHANA?

In the office, Siva's gaze fell on Rajan.

'Oh Rajan, you do not attend either the morning class or the evening Satsang. Are you not feeling well?'

'I am all right, Swamiji. But, I do Japa and meditation in my room. I never waste a single moment.

I am always engaged morning and evening in my personal Sadhana.

'No, no. It should not make you neglect attending morning and evening classes. In what way is this personal Sadhana superior to common meditation, Japa and study? You will learn many new things from the morning lectures. Your mind will be alert. People generally imagine that they can meditate in seclusion. Very few can. Do not delude yourself with wrong notions. I have seen what sort of individual Sadhana people do. They only sleep. You will get up at 4 in the morning and do some vigorous Japa for a few minutes. Later, you will slightly relax...and you will only know when the tea bell rings at 7 a.m. Who prevents you from doing your Japa? Even during your work, you can do Japa. If you cut short your gossiping programmes, you can do a lot of Sadhana. Please attend the morning and evening classes hereafter.'

12th AUGUST, 1949

THE BOUNDARIES OF DIVINE LIFE

All was quiet in the office: everyone, including Siva, intent on the work on hand.

Quietly, a thick, short, young and toothless youth stepped in clad in full Khadi. It was Panikker.

And, quietly, he touched Siva's feet and sprinkled the dust on the crown of his head, worshipped the feet with a 100-rupee note and sat down on the bench.

This has been a routine with him for a few days past.

'Are you married?' queried Siva.

'No, Swamiji, I came across your writings much too early in life to commit that error. I have remained single: but you have always been with me.

'But, you never wrote to me."

'Swamiji, my only desire was to have your Darshan. I never wrote to you. But the letters of your name I had inscribed on the tablet of my heart. I do not say that I have not had my struggles: but faith in you has always been my staff and difficulties have melted away the moment I thought of you.'

Siva was, by this time, engrossed in his letters. As Panikker got up to leave, Siva quietly picked up two Prasad packets from the table and handed him. After touching Siva's feet in reverence again, P. left.

And, perhaps, there are millions like him, who have taken Siva as their Guru and God, worship him and lead the divine life, but whom the Society might not have known at all. Where are the boundaries of Divine Life, of Siva's influence? The Society's records cannot show.

THE AUTOGRAPH THAT SAVED

It seems we are in for a good treat today. Krishnayya enters the Hall the moment P. left it. Siva made the usual enquiries.

'Swamiji, my health is completely all right now. Two months ago I was laid up with typhoid. My condition was very bad. It almost looked that I could live only for some days more. A parcel arrived from here. The Doctor had forbidden me to read. But, I asked my

people to let me see what it was. Unwilling to refuse my request, they showed me...and it was a book by you. I took it in my hand, pressed it to my eyes and head, and opened it. My eyes rested for a few minutes on your autograph and blessings. I did not read the book then: I could not. But that very moment, there was a turn for the better in my health. And, I am here today. It is only your blessing that has enabled me to fulfil my great ambition in life-to have your Darshan.

SILVER SANDALS FOR THEE

Even while K. was talking, a Sadhu had come into the office, holding in his hands a pair of silver-plated sandals of the orthodox type. He placed them near Siva's feet and sat down gazing on Siva's lotus feet in silence.

Siva turned to him: 'Wherefrom do you come, Swamiji Maharaj?'

Bhagavan, I have come from Banaras. I am in a Mutt there. I had an intense desire to take Sannyasa. A Grihastha devotee in Banaras with whom I was living performed Viraja Homa for me. Then he asked me to go to you for Diksha and Upadesha.

'Will you stay here for some days?'

If I have your commands, Swamiji, I would like to leave tomorrow morning after Diksha?'

'Come, then: I will initiate you now itself."

'Bhagavan: please place your lotus-feet on these sandals. These will be my refuge and protection throughout my life. They will represent you for me, even as Rama's sandals represented Him for Bharata.'

Siva stood for a few moments on the silver sandals, uttering 'Sivoham' 'Soham' 'Satchidananda Swarupoham.'

Then both of them left the Hall. Siva took him straight to the Ganges Ghat and initiated him into the holy order of Sannyasa.

13th AUGUST, 1949

SADHANA FOR EVERY MAN

A Telugu couple was on pilgrimage. They came into the office, sat at Siva's feet for some time and then, while departing, requested Siva for some 'Upadesha.'

Siva turned to the man: Do Japa, Kirtan, and Dhyan in Brahmamuhurtha. Study Gita daily. Observe Mouna for at least two hours. Fast on Ekadashi. Be charitable. Above all: see God in everyone. Whatever you see and touch is God alone. If you have this Bhavana always, you will get over all evils-Kama, Krodha, etc.- you will develop a compassionate heart and you will attain Moksha soon."

SADHANA FOR EVERY WOMAN

And, the lady came up for Upadesha. Siva told her:

Do Japa, Kirtan and Dhyana also. Serve your husband. Bring up your children in a saintly way and mould their character properly. Study Gita. Observe Ekadashi Vrata. Do not quarrel with anyone.' At the last remark, everyone began to laugh. And, Siva added: Ladies cannot remain without quarrelling, I think! Then, gradually reduce the number of quarrels.'

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

R.C. Joshi had an offer from a Naturopathic Institute of an appointment as Private Secretary to the Chief there. He was already the Assistant Traffic Superintendent in the O.T. Railway. Siva asked him to recount all the privileges he enjoyed in the Railway.

It is sheer folly to give up this and jump to the Naturopathic Institute. Stay where you are. God knows which place is best suited to you. You are enjoying princely privileges in the Railway and you have the greatest opportunity of doing intense spiritual Sadhana. You will shine as a high railway official soon, as you are still very young. The first month's salary on promotion as District Traffic Superintendent you should send here.'

On learning that he has to send the major portion of his salary to his brothers, etc., Siva remarked: 'I am more than your brother. I see that not a pie that you give is spent in wasteful channels. Every bit goes to the spread of knowledge-a divine service. When the time comes for you to leave this body, you will have the supreme satisfaction that you have done something for a divine cause: will your brothers help you in any way at that time?'

NO LOVE FOR DONATIONS

Lest the reader should entertain the false notion that Siva is hankering after money and that was the motive behind instructing J. to stay where he is, I should like to add here a conversation that took place nearly five years ago when I had come to Ananda Kutir to attend the winter Sadhana Week.

Siva asked me to talk in the Bhajan during one of the gatherings. I explained how during my official career as a servant of the Government of India....

Siva, a member of the audience, at once interrupted-But you are drawing a Deputy Collector's salary.'

I had derived peace and inspiration from Siva's books, letters, and literature, and how the seven days' stay at His Abode had given me all the strength that would keep me strong physically, mentally and spiritually-till I got back to Ananda Kutir.

On the parting day, I was coming down the hill with Siva, and as I mentioned earlier in this volume, casually remarked: 'How I wish, Swamiji, I could stay here itself."

The response of the sage was immediate: 'Who asked you to go?' etc.

If he had any thought about the donation I could afford to send to the Society, with no one but myself to depend on me, he would never have said that: and I would not be here today. My next visit to Ananda Kutir very soon after this was as a renunciate.

THOU ART BEYOND THESE!

'Go and take food. The bell has gone,' said Siva to Swaminathan of New Delhi, who had come to attend the Janmashtami celebrations.

I shall take food later on, Swamiji. I take only rice and curds. I have given up salt, tamarind and chillies.'

These are thoughtless actions. You will only waste away your body and your energy. You won't have strength to do any Sadhana. Go and take Sambhar today.' (Sambhar is a South Indian preparation containing all the three!) That will upset my system, Swamiji.'

'What YOU have given up, YOU can take, easily. Start taking everything, then.'

S. nodded. Perhaps he had understood the deepest significance of this aphoristic utterance (Sutra). You give up: you take up: you enjoy: you suffer, etc, Mark that in all these cases YOU are the same. That, in essence, is the teaching of the Upanishad: Tat Twam Asi. Not any of these changing conditions which constitute YOUR play. You are the Player, quite independent of the Play. You took on the ignorance which produced the Samsara: at any moment You can discard it and re-assume Your Satchidananda Swaroopa.

ACTION, NOT MERE WORD WILL SATISFY ME

Then, Siva turned to me: 'I have asked that Swamiji from Banaras to stay on. He is a very learned Sannyasin. Yourself, Premanandaji and a couple of other inmates should study Sanskrit under him. You should complete the Prasthanatraya at least before he leaves the place.'

Yes, Swamiji,' was my habitual reply.

'Merely saying Yes, Swamiji' will not do. You should DO so. For a few days, you will be vigorous: then the class will stop!'

18th AUGUST, 1949

APPLIED GUNATRAYA VIBHAGA

Sri Venkata Krishnayya is leaving today. He prostrated at Siva's feet and promised to open a branch of the Society at his place, and to convert his private collection of about 800 spiritual books into a public library under the auspices of the Divine Life Society. He said: 'Even now I am lending books to those who ask for them."

That is the Rajasic type. When you open the Divine Life Library, you should convert it into a Sattvic one. You should be aggressive in your thirst for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. Even if one is disinclined to read them, you should thrust the books in their hands and let the knowledge spread.'

Everyone was amused at this interesting application of a great truth. Sri K. asked: 'Swamiji, I shall certainly try to follow what you have said. But, tell me the classification and definition once again. I will note it down.'

The Sattvic Branch will seek out Sadhakas and help them: seek out worldly-minded men and through love and persuasion, redirect their steps towards God. The Rajasic Branch will clear the doubts of those who approach it. But, the Tamasic Branch will neglect even this. Even if a Sadhaka knocks at its door, there will be no response.'

To which category of Yoga Teacher do you belong?' asked Siva, turning to Vishnudevanandaji.

V. remained silent and introspective.

If you go to the roof of everyone, wake him up and teach him Asanas, you are Sattvic Teacher. If you merely teach the man who asks you for it, you are Rajasic. If you don't do even that, you are Tamasic.'

Ramamurthy relieved V. by giving the reply: 'Swamiji, he is of the Rajasic type with a leaning towards the Sattvic. Once he knows that we are interested in Hatha Yoga or Vayubhakshana, he would come to our room every day and see to it that we are regular in our practice.'

Siva appreciated this diagnosis!

SECRET OF SERVICE-MENTAL ALERTNESS

'Oh Viswanathji, did you give that visitor from Nagpur, curd with his food?'

'No, Swamiji: curd was not available: therefore, I gave him good buttermilk.'

Siva smiled, as he always does when he has something startling to say. 'If you want to be a Karma Yogi, you should have an alert mind. You should be ever-ready to improvise. I will teach you a good method of preparing curd within a. few minutes. Take some milk and mix some lemon juice or citric acid, add some sugar or salt. There you are! You can't make out how it was made.'

NIP IT IN THE BUD

Siva noticed that I was turning the trunk also in an effort to turn the head. 'What has happened? Stiff-neck! Treat it immediately. Vishnuji, please give him hot fomentation. Nip it in the bud.'

Similar is Siva's spiritual teaching also. Nip it in the bud. When you have a stiff-neck (arrogance and other evils), give the good hot fomentation of S.B. 40 (Divine Injection Shoe Beating 40 times)

and nip it in the bud. If you allow it to grow in you, you will be permanently deformed. You will never be able to bend.

CARE OF CHILDREN'

The dinner bell had gone and Ramamurthy went to the kitchen and brought up his Bhiksha. Siva noticed the tiffin-box and surmised that that contained R's food. He asked R. to show him what he was eating. 'Only so little? You, too, have a baby stomach? Why do you carry it? Why not take it here itself?'

'Swamiji, if I take food now, I immediately feel heavy and can't do any work for about an hour afterwards. Therefore, I take my food at about 1 p.m.'

That won't do. You are simply ruining your health. You should not eat stale food. Hot, hot! Eat plenty and while the food is hot: then sleep if your body needs rest. The body will adjust itself to all sorts of your whims and fancies: but in course of time, it will break down. Take proper care of your health.'

28th AUGUST, 1949

BACK TO THE LORD'S NAME

After straying away into the folds of pseudo-Gurus whose glittering words allure the credulous seeker away from his path to the Goal, in an astonishingly short period of time, Sri Bhirud has today rejoined Siva's divine life fold! Today he writes:

Dear Swamiji,

OM Namah Sivaya.

Salutations and prostrations. I am really very much thankful to you for the kind and loving care that you take of me.

I am very glad to let you know today that the clouds of misunderstanding have already begun melting. I am much more open to you now than I was some months ago. May God bless me with clear understanding and intuition and help me to follow the path of spirituality with more vigour and zeal.

OM Namah Sivaya is really a gem. The repetition of this Mantra at once changes the vibrations of all our bodies and brings up harmony in its train.

Siva at once welcomes him back to the divine life fold. Siva's super-rational love at once envelopes the aspirant. It encourages him. It lightens the contrite heart and lessens the agony of separation. Once again, Siva's touch of love enlivens the Sadhaka, infuses joy and peace into him and kindles the fire of love of God and devotion to His name.

29th AUGUST, 1949

LEARN TO BEHAVE

A high official has come. He was talking to Siva in the office. In the meantime, the Ashramites were busy arranging for the visitor's entertainment. And, the officer was chatting with Siva between sips of tea.

'Swamiji, would you mind if I smoke?' 'Oh, no: certainly you can smoke.'

The officer lit a cigarette and remarked, happily: 'Swamiji, you are indeed very catholic. I have visited several other Ashrams where they would positively prohibit one from smoking inside their premises. They are all narrow-minded.'

Siva merely smiled.

After the officer had left, he remarked: 'If I do not restrain them or behave unpleasantly towards them: if I permit them to do what they please, then I am catholic. What a fine mentality this is!'

'A man should learn to behave as he should, not as he likes. That is the secret of success and popularity. It is the mark of culture. You would then achieve control over your senses, too. If, for instance, this officer had the good sense to refrain from smoking while he was on the bank of the Ganges, he would certainly have gained a good spiritual Samskara: he would have obtained a certain amount of control over his senses, and developed his Will to a certain extent. But, the evil habit is allowed to get the better of man. He has become slave to the evil habit.

BRIGADIER YADU NATH SING

'Look at Yadu Nath Sing,' continued Siva. Brig. Yadu Nath Sing has come to the Ashram for a couple of days' quiet Sadhana on the Ganges' bank.

'He does not smoke: he does not touch liquor. That is why he has become highly popular in the Army. There is Major-General Sharma. And, Major-General Parameswaran Pillai-they are all saintly personalities, though they occupy very high positions.

MILITARY TRAINING: BEST FOR SADHANA

'I think, soldiers are eminently suited for obtaining Atma-Sakshatkara. The moment they enrol in the Army, they set aside their very life as a mere nothing, and place DUTY as their ideal. They are ever-ready to give up their lives. Who will do that? None of these big officers.

They have courage-one of the foremost qualities a Sadhaka should possess. Lord Krishna, too, has placed this Abhayam first in His list of Daivi Sampath. What can a weakling achieve? One might pose to be a big Sadhaka: he might repeat Aham Brahma Asmi all the twenty-four hours. But, at night, if a rat runs near his bed, he will shiver with fright! What Atma-Sakshatkara will he get?

'And, the Military Schools train the boys to be punctual, to be truthful, to be honest and to develop the spirit of service. The British have these qualities in abundance. Doon School is today famous for its best training of students. Look at Mani, that little boy who came here the other day. A B.A. or an M.A. cannot stand before him in general knowledge or boldness or sharpness of intellect. That is how he has been trained. That is why, parents long to get their sons trained in such schools even though they have to pay heavy bills. The British might have gone away from India. But they have left some very laudable tradition by establishing such schools in India. The majority of Englishmen possess such noble qualities. They know the value of time. They know the value of the Word-they stick to their promise. They work sincerely. They would not evade. Some Indians are crooked, cunning and evasive. If they undertake to work, they would find out ways and means of evading it: if they have to

work for eight hours, they would be taking their time easy, going for tea every hour, for smoking every half-hour, and chit-chatting most of the time. But, an Englishman would work when he works and play while he may play. Such training the pupils got in schools like the Doon School. They turn out courageous, truthful, honest and ideal citizens. Indian Schools also should take a lesson from them. The schools should take more interest in the up-bringing of the boys than they do now. The ordinary school in India today might charge very little by way of tuition fees: but it takes as little interest in the boy's welfare. The boy goes to the school when he likes, develops every kind of evil habit under the very nose of the masters: and it is small wonder that our schools and colleges turn out citizens who lower the moral standard of the nation.'

So saying, Siva was coming near the Post Office when he noticed a lot of rubbish stored up in a corner just outside the Post Office. A broken chair, several gunny-bags, waste paper and what-not!

'Ohji, what a beautiful way of maintaining the Ashram! Please have it cleaned properly. (Turning to us) He is a Vedantin. Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman-is his motto. Then, why clean this rubbish? That should not be the attitude. Only if we keep our inside and our surroundings clean, will the real meaning of Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman reflect in our Antahkarana.'

30th AUGUST, 1949

AN EXAMPLE FOR ARMY GENERALS

Brig. Yadu Nath Sing is very punctual and regular with his meditation, Swadhyaya, etc. He eats with everyone in the Ashram.

In fact, he leads such a simple life of Sadhana while at the Ashram that Swami D. once asked him (thinking that he might be a sepoy) what his pay was: and nearly jumped off his feet, when he was told coolly by the Brig. Three thousand'. The Brig. is a lover of discipline and he conforms to Ashram discipline while he is there.

He admired Siva for the very same quality. 'Swamiji, you seem to be the first to come to the morning and evening classes, and you are very regular at the office, too."

'Yes, that is most essential. Unless we set an example, we cannot expect others to be punctual with their daily programme, and zealous in their work and Sadhana. If the Brig. sits comfortably on a sofa in his camp and merely orders about his battalion, the war would be lost. On the other hand, if he himself leads the army on the battle-front and himself mingles with the soldiers of his battalion, then the effect will be miraculous: every soldier would fight with fanatic enthusiasm and zeal and victory would be assured. Everywhere, it is the same rule. The leader should be an all-round ideal: and his exemplary character and conduct should inspire everyone to follow him.'

SEPTEMBER, 1949

5th SEPTEMBER, 1949

SERVICE AND MEDITATION

A short discourse by Siva in the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University class was a thriller in the morning.

There are two methods of getting rid of evil Vrittis and acquiring virtues. One is to meditate on the Lord or the Atma. The Lord or the Atma is the very source of all virtues: and meditation on Him is sure to rouse those virtues in you. Evil or negative Vrittis can be overcome by this method. But, this method is only for a very advanced Sadhaka who can really meditate on the Lord with great concentration of the mind.

That needs continued practice for a long time and great Vairagya. Such advanced Sadhakas can meditate for a long time at a stretch. You will know that they are advanced Sadhakas when you approach them-by the lustre of their eyes, by their calm and serene disposition, by their expression of joy and by the magnetic aura that surrounds them. You cannot bring about these without much prolonged Sadhana.

'If a beginner, on the other hand, says 'I am meditating for five hours', he is deceiving himself and others, too. He is either building castles in the air, or converting his mind into the devil's workshop. For him there is the method of service.

'Selfless service also can eradicate the evil Vrittis in you and enable you to develop virtues. This is the easier method: and, for a

neophyte, the surer one, too. You are at once conscious of the process of transformation. You consciously develop the virtues and curb the evils. By serving the sick, you develop compassion: by the innumerable forms of selfless service, you acquire all the virtues that are the very foundation of advanced Sadhana.

Even a neophyte should not give up meditation on this score. Meditate for half an hour. Then, go out and serve. Try to negate the ego: try to get rid of evil qualities: try to develop virtues. Again, meditate for half an hour: now, the evils which you have to conquer will automatically present themselves to you-and conquest would be easy through Vichara and Viveka.

Thus, for a long time, the two-selfless service and meditation-will have to proceed hand in hand. This combined method of attacking the evils, one through selfless service and the other through meditation, and this two-fold method of developing virtues will bear fruit very quickly and you will all become Jivanmuktas in this very birth.'

MIRACULOUS RELIEF

Batra, a Punjabi refugee teacher, related the following experience of his:

'Swamiji, I was employed as a teacher in one of the refugee camps. The headmaster ill-treated me very much. He was jealous of me. Once he tried to implicate me in the wrong admission of a student in the school. I was very sore at heart. I did not know what to do. I did not get sleep that night. At about 12 midnight, I sat up in my bed and determined to meditate on your Holiness for a solution. Very

soon I saw a brilliant flash of light: in that I saw you, Swamiji. It was very, very clear. And, you commanded me to tender my resignation of the job. I offered my prayers to you. And, then went to bed with a calm resolve to do as you commanded me.

'Next morning, the first thing I did was to present the letter of resignation. The matter somehow went up to the Secretary and management of the school. They would not accept the resignation: I explained the whole thing to them. They at once understood me: I was absolved of responsibility in the case, and the headmaster, too, was at once transferred to another school."

PODDAR AND GOENKA

The mansion on the other side of the Ganges attracted the attention of a visiting family. Siva explained:

That is the Satsang Hall of the Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Jayadayal Goenkaji of the Gita Press comes here every year during the summer and holds a Satsang which is attended by many people. He has excellent arrangements for families and devotees intending to stay there.

'He and Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar are the very soul of the Gita Press. You might have heard about 'Kalyan' and 'Kalyana Kalpataru', the two magazines: one in Hindi and the other in English, conducted by the Gita Press. And, they have published very many wonderful editions of the Gita: Upanishads, Ramayana etc. They have rendered great service to the cause of dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

'Jayadayalji is a great devotee of the Lord. Though he and Poddarji are in white clothes, they ought to be considered Sannyasins only. They are deemed the Gurus of the Marwari community. They are held in high esteem by the Marwaris. All the twenty-four hours of the day, these high-souled persons engage themselves in selfless service to humanity and in Hari Bhajan.

They are an ideal which every householder should try to keep before him. Their exemplary life should be an eye-opener to everyone. You, too, can and should become like them. Devote yourself in service and Hari Bhajan. Never waste a single moment of the day in useless pursuits.'

"TURN THE OTHER CHEEK"

A visitor has brought his young son, to see Siva. They live in Bombay. This man had curious notions about Yoga and Sannyasa that he would always criticise Siva and his activities! Siva knew this, too. But, this knowledge only endeared him all the more to Siva. Such is Siva's overpowering 'blind' love!

Today the gentleman's son is a criminal. The boy bolted away with a lot of money from his relative's house. The boy is barely fifteen: and the father did not know what to do with him.

Without a moment's hesitation, Siva offered his solution. He talked to the boy for over an hour on ethics and morality, about the glory of earning one's living by honest sweat of the brow. The boy was completely changed. He begged Siva's pardon: and he promised both to Siva and his own father that he would never indulge in theft and pilfering ever after in his life. Some other visitors thought that

the boy should be brought to books and then an application should be made to the Magistrate to have the boy sent to a reformatory. Siva counselled as follows:

If you take the case to the Court, then all of you, including the ladies of the house, will have to appear as witnesses. It is a shameful thing for a mother or a sister to appear in a court against her own son or brother. If the boy is convicted, then the impression would do him great harm: a positive theft-Samskara will be formed in his mind. And, even if he is put through the Reformatory, it will be very difficult to reform him. The boys of the reformatory are also of the same class. Their association might even worsen his character. Further, if the Magistrate does not agree to send him to the reformatory, but sends him to the jail, then the boy's career is doomed.

Pardon him. Treat him with love. He promises to take up work and live as an honest, dutiful citizen. Give him a chance to do so. Pray to God. He should also do regular Japa and Kirtan. The Antaryamin will surely hear your prayers and mould the character of the boy properly.'

Thus did Siva save the boy: and he saved the honour of the family too. What a magnanimous heart! 'Return love for hatred'. Here is one who actually lives this doctrine. And, he has always said: 'Do not do a single good act and then try to see if the other man is changed or not. He might even look at your goodness with suspicion. You should go on doing good to him, at every turn, and till the very end of your life. He is bound to feel the love you have for him, and feel for his own shortcoming.....sometime or the other.'

SEE NO EVIL

A lady from Denmark has written to Siva, narrating the story of her brother who left her ten years ago after misbehaving himself in all manner of ways. He was fond of pilfering: he would cheat the family members themselves: and he was the home of many other vices. The lady is a disciple of Siva. She had read Siva's books and imbibed his spirit of universal love. Yet, she could not solve this new problem, and so she wrote to Siva and asked: 'Should I allow him to stay with me: or, should I do something to him by way of giving him some money and ask him politely to go away?'

To sage Siva, everyone is divine. Evil does not exist in his vision at all. Therefore, at once he wrote back:

'Welcome your brother to your house. Forget the past. See no evil in him. Trust him. Love him. You should treat him in such a manner that whatever misgivings he has about the reception that might await him at your house should at once be dispelled and he should feel quite at home in your house.

Psychologically, this will have a tremendous effect on the delinquent. Even the worst criminal, if he is treated in such a loving manner can at once be converted and reformed. It needs courage born of a conviction that all are essentially divine: and Love supreme. Once you have this conviction and this love, you will work wonders.'

I have seen other 'saints' who have declared that they have seen God. They are so different from Siva in this respect. One saint had a disciple whom he had ordered never to touch money. This disciple

went on a pilgrimage of Uttarakhand. He was taken ill. At a moment of great need, he had to accept some money from a Bhakta. He confessed this to the Guru and begged his pardon. But, no: the Guru banished him from his presence forever: 'I will never see his face again.' This attitude is alien to Siva. Says Siva:

'Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone is a sinner. This is only a superficial view of Man. Deeper within, there is the Self, the Ever-Pure Atman. When you learn to perceive Him, all these superficialities will vanish. Mistakes and sins will vanish from your sight. Brahman alone will remain. You will see Brahman alone everywhere.' That is his philosophy in a nutshell: and the first person who has practised this philosophy to the letter and the spirit is Siva himself.

CAN SANNYASINS EAT BISCUITS?

'Call everyone from the office,' said Siva to Vishnuji. And, Siva seated himself outside the dispensary. He was on his way from his Kutir to the Bhajan Hall for the evening Satsang.

One by one, we went to him, to receive a handful of biscuits.

'Oh Esanandaji, you also have some biscuits. But, can a Sanyasi eat biscuits?'

And, Siva continued, in reply to his own question: T used to say to people who go to Uttarkashi from here: He has Ananda Kutir Samskaras. He cannot live in Uttarakashi,'But, here Sannyasins and Brahmacharis are doing Seva night and day. They should have proper food and conveniences. You must have what is essential for the body. Only you should not give yourself away to luxury

Chaddhaji was intently listening to Siva. Siva turned towards him and remarked: I have no belief in the Sannyasa that you believe in.' Siva's conception of Sannyass is something novel and dynamic. Service, absolutely selfless, untiring and dynamic service, which Sannyssins alone can do that is his idea. That is what he himself is.

7th SEPTEMBER, 1949

MRS. NEHRU

Mrs. Brij Lal Nehru and Sri Goswami Ganesh Duttji actually inaugurated the Birthday celebrations this year, today itself. They arrived at the Ashram at 1 p.m. and were cordially received by Siva himself. They were entertained to tea and light refreshments by Siva. During the course of the conversation, Goswamiji told Mrs. Nehru: Today is Sri Swamiji's Jayanti also: and so it is an especially auspicious day for us to have his Darshan.'

Someone present pointed out that the Jayanti is actually tomorrow.

'But, we have come today for his Darshan: for us, his Jayanthi is today.'

Siva had, in the meantime, autographed several of his books and handed them over to Mrs. Nehru. Overwhelmed with joy, she remarked: 'Swamiji, your books will by themselves form a good library. You have done good Prachar.'

'Swamiji's is the Gita-ideal,' said Goswamiji. He works in the spirit of the Gita. And, the teachings of the Gita are embodied in him. He works unattached and without the least expectation of a reward. He

has led thousands of people along the right path: he has illumined the hearts of many. Wherever you go, you find his disciples.'

Your holiness had invited my husband to come here. Owing to several reasons, he could not come this time..' said Mrs. Nehru.

Yes, yes: kindly ask him also to pay a visit to this place at the earliest opportunity,' said Siva.

While they stood up to take leave of Siva, Goswamiji asked Siva: 'Please tell me some Seva that I can do to you.'

I ask for your blessings. That is the best Seva you can do for me.'

12th SEPTEMBER, 1949

THE HEALING BALM

From Rameswaram comes a letter from Sri X whose daughter is in a strange plight. Indecision is the main complaint. She refuses to marry the boy chosen by her parents: but later regrets. She has an unknown dread for marriage. She herself recognises the trouble: but does not know how to get over it. And so, she wrote to Siva. Here is Siva's consoling reply:

Sri....

OM Namo Narayanaya. Adorations and salutations. Thy kind letter,

I am conducting prayer, Kirtan and Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa for your health, peace and prosperity. All your difficulties will vanish.

Be bold. Be cheerful. Study well and pass B.A. There is a brilliant future for you. You are born for higher things. May you shine like Meera or Queen Chudalai or Sulabha.

Be regular in your Japa, Kirtan, prayer and meditation, and study of the Gita. This is very, very important. This is a great, general and spiritual tonic.

I shall serve you nicely. Kindly follow my instructions. Obey the instructions and commands of your parents who are your well-wishers. You will be happy. Whatever they decide, you will have to accept.

In this world, one does not get what one wants but we have to be content with what God wants to give us.

May God bless you. With regards, Prem and OM, Sivananda

14th SEPTEMBER, 1949

A STUDENT'S TRIBUTE TO SIVA

Here is a letter from Sri R. Mani of the Doon School (the son of a High Court Judge):

Revered Guruji,

Thank you very much for your kind blessings and your lovely book. I cannot express my joy on a piece of paper, on finding out that your blessings contain something sweet. There are a few people who bless others and do not give them any advice. I am sure your advice will one day make me a great man. My parents were overjoyed to see the book, so were my brothers and sisters. I am now at School. I hope to get another piece of good advice from your holiness.

-Your obedient student, R. Mani.

And Siva's reply:

Sri R. Mani, Doon School.

OM Namo Narayanaya.

Adorations and salutations.

I am in due receipt of your two kind letters.

Go to bed early. Get up at 4 a.m. and study your lessons. They will be indelibly impressed on your mind. Study for one hour in the early morning hours is equal to study for four hours after sunrise. Pray; do Japa of SRI RAM;

and Kirtan for 10 minutes before you retire to bed, and also as soon as you get up from bed.

Be patient and persevering. Avoid bad company. Obey elders, teachers, and parents. You will have success in life and in all class examinations and peace. During holidays, kindly come and stay with me.

May Lord bless you. With regards, Prem, and OM,

Sivananda

Precious advice which every student should write on the tablet of his heart and follow if he desires to grow into a superman!

15th SEPTEMBER, 1949

PROTECTOR OF REFUGEES

Early in the morning, Siva went to Sri Swami Premanandaji's room and spoke to him (and those of us who were there) as follows:

'A young man has come to the Ashram. He has resigned his job, given up his home and everything and has made up his mind to stay here itself. That elderly man has also done the same thing. They were sure that they would get admission here: that is why they have so boldly ventured out. How can we refuse them admission? Whatever rule we might choose to follow in regard to the admission of inmates, how are we to apply the rule to people like this?

'No doubt, our finances are low. But the God who sent these people here should provide the wherewithal for their maintenance also. We shall have to throw the burden on Him and admit them. By His grace, our finances will also improve.

The experience of the last few months clearly proves one thing. If we send away some inmates on account of our inability to maintain them, God immediately sends more and more. We sent away about 20 and one by one, God has sent us and the number is almost the same now as it was before retrenchment. Those who come here are all devotees of the Lord and young men full of the spirit of renunciation and dispassion. If we don't admit them, where will they go?

'We should, therefore, reflect more deeply before we refuse admission or send people away. Our action might force them to go back to their old surroundings, or it might put them to untold suffering.

I think what we should do is to increase our income. We should find out ways and means for that. Every Branch should vigorously collect funds for the Ashram. Every devotee who has visited the Ashram and seen what dynamic work is going on here and what

service is being rendered here should apply himself vigorously to collecting funds for the Cause. Some people must go from here also on propaganda work.'

Siva turned to a visitor from Bombay, who was standing near him:

'What do you say: am I right? You should start this at once in Matunga. You need not ever ask for money. Distribute leaflets and pamphlets, and occasionally tell them of the work that is going on here. That will do: they will automatically contribute funds. In the case of those whom you know very well, you might go to their house on the first night and tell them: You have got your salary today: you must give 10 per cent to the noble cause.' The work should go on. That can only be done if all co-operate in this campaign. And, the campaign should go on for ever. Every month we should receive regular financial help.

'God has always been kind to us. Every crisis that has arisen in the past has passed off smoothly. He sends timely helpers. Now the time has come to expand the work further. Apply yourselves heart and soul to the task.'

19th SEPTEMBER, 1949

FIRST BHOJAN: THEN BHAJAN

The Asstt. District Magistrate of Tehri has come to have Siva's Darshan. As is usual with Siva, the visitor was first entertained to tea and refreshments.

And, in the meantime, Siva had opened his copy of Vedanta Jyoti' and was singing some of the songs from it. He noticed that the A.D.M. had not taken his tea.

Your tea is getting cold. Go ahead with it.'

'Swamiji, this food we can get anywhere: I came here to have spiritual food from you.'

Smilingly Siva replied: First Bhojan: then Bhajan. Unless this gross physical hunger is satisfied, the mind will be unable to receive, digest and assimilate the subtle spiritual food. The old orthodox system of observing Vratas and then listening to scriptures was all right. Nowadays, the new civilisation has made man food-minded. Even to miss a Chhota-Hazri or the evening tea is a great sacrifice. When the body does not get it, the mind is there only and refuses to attend to the study of scriptures. Therefore, in those days it was first Bhajan, then Bhojan: but, now first Bhojan and then Bhajan!'

The entire party had a hearty laugh at this humorous discourse. The ADM received a number of Siva's books: and, while parting, reverently he touched Siva's feet. He was later shown round the entire Ashram. The Yoga Museum is unique. It is a great wonder. And, Swami Krishnanandaji's exposition of its arrangement is equally wonderful. These pictures we have seen individually. But, when they are arranged in a proper order, they convey a lot of wisdom.'

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE..OR MARRIAGE BUREAU..OR INTRODUCTION LEAGUE?

What do people take Siva to be?

Dr... is out of employment. He wants Siva to find a job for him. Is Siva conducting an employment exchange?.

Engineer...has a daughter, and he is after a son-in-law. He wants Siva's help. Is Siva, then, the head of a marriage bureau?

A fresh recruit to the bar dreams of a lucrative practice. He asks for an introduction letter from Siva to leading Advocates, businessmen, etc. Or, perhaps in the eyes of the public, Siva is the director of an Introduction League?

Don't blame them. They are sincere, honest and well-meaning people. They themselves do not know the reason. But, they are drawn towards Siva for anything and everything. As a child thinks of its mother whether it wants milk, or a toy, or wants to ease itself or to go out into the lawn, so also these people, the devotees of Siva, turn to him whenever they feel any need: and Siva supplies them everything: from the highest wisdom down to a prescription for head-ache. Siva is ever-ready with his counsel: and he actively helps the devotee in the latter's quest, too. Siva does not trifle with the devotee's requests considering them beneath his dignity to be asked such unspiritual' things. Hear what he himself says:

WORK AND MEDITATION

Siva was talking to Swami Adwayanandaji. 'Oh Swamiji, please look into the Post Office. It now looks like the G.P.O. in a big city. Look at the number of packets and parcels: the number of magazine bundles that go out every day. Swami X would say 'Oh, this work is all Vikshepa'. But, what can a Sannyasin do? He cannot meditate all the twenty-four hours. The daily routine of Sannyasins therefore

becomes 'Eat roti: answer calls of nature: form small groups of three and four and talk about every blessed thing in the world-this Kshetra is doing this: that Sadhu is doing that. They will sit up in the evening and open a big Vedantic book and start discussion: it will very soon turn again into the usual ruts—the worldly topics, scandal- mongering and gossip. I have no time even to take food. Even with 12 per cent sugar, I have to keep myself busy always. Every man should engage himself in strenuous work. The body and the mind should be ever busy. And, if the work is of a spiritual nature, the mind is automatically kept well above material thoughts and schemes. People are also benefited. Occasionally, one should close his eyes and feel I am Akarta, I am Abhokta: I am Sakshi. Aham Brahmasmi: Sivoham: Satchidananda Swaroopoham.' That is, I think, the best Sadhana. You have got several faculties: these faculties will fade away if they are not used properly. The Indriyas only should not be allowed to engage themselves in wrong actions. They should be used properly. One man observed Mowna for 12 years: and when he broke the Mowna and was asked to deliver a lecture, he could not utter a word. If one starts saying-This is spiritual: this will cause Vikshepa' etc-and so forcedly restrains the Indriyas and denies the use of his faculties, he will only deaden them and put them out of commission. That is not proper Sadhana. Direct all the Indriyas in the proper channel. Use all your faculties properly. Then, Atma Jnana will come by itself."

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 4.12.0 AND 5 IS ONE RUPEE

Swami Adwayanandaji has brought with him an able artist and painter. As soon as Siva entered the office, he met this artist and greeted him: 'OM Namo Narayanaya,' and said, turning to Swami A.

'He is a great asset to the Society itself. Six months he can be in South India, and six months here.

'Ask him to paint some Drama curtains for the Ashram. We have a Drama for every occasion. But, we always use mere cloth as curtains. The first one may depict the Ashram, Himalayas and Ganga. Another one representing Devatas-Ganesha, Subramanya, Vishnu, etc. Like that we can go on.' Suddenly Siva's expression changed, and he continued with a boyish smile:

If we ask all of a sudden, money for three canvases, these people will refuse: we have to be careful. First, we should ask for money to buy the canvas, then for colours, then for brushes, then for another curtain and so on. If you ask Rs. 3000, you will only get a refusal. But, if you ask six times Rs. 500 on every occasion, you will get. That is the people's mentality,

'Similarly, with books also. If you price a book Rs. 5, people will not purchase. 'Oh this is too much', they will say. Just say it is Rs. 4.12.0, they will readily take it. To them, it is not a matter of four annas, but one rupee-that book costs five and this costs four and something. We should learn the ways of the world and adapt ourselves. That is the secret of success,'

24th SEPTEMBER. 1949

PUNJAB LECTURE TOUR MEMOIRS

Sri Ram Piyari Trivedi, Head Postmaster, Dehra Dun, has come. He reverently touched Siva's feet and sat on a bench near him in the office.

'From Fyzabad?' queried Siva.

'How well you remember, Swamiji. It is a great wonder. Now, I have been posted to Dehra Dun, as the Head Postmaster there. I am coming from Dehra Dun.

'Swamiji, I still remember your instructions to me when we had your Darshan at Fyzabad 15 years ago. You told then to do Kirtan, to practise Japa and Dhyan. By your grace and blessings, we have been doing what little we can in this regard, Swamiji.'

'Oh yes, I remember I came to your house also.'

'Yes, Swamiji, and you did Kirtan in our house. It was really a great blessing of the Lord.'

"A good, noble soul,' said Siva after the visitor had left. How well the true devotee and the loving Guru remember each other. And, with what reverence and faith, the devotee remembers and adheres to the holy commands of his Guru!

25th SEPTEMBER, 1949

ANANDA KUTIR: VAIKUNTHA ON EARTH

Sri T.R. Ganapathirama Iyer of Tinnevelly has written:

Please place this letter at the feet of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Of late, my heart has become feeble but I have not become weak of mind. Please send by VPP Ganges water, say about eight ounzes. Please send also holy Prasad. I am focussing my attention on the lotus feet of Lord Sri Krishna and also Swamiji. I have also instructed my son

to send you, when this mortal coil falls, the bones for immersion in the Ganges. With prostrations at the feet of Swamiji Maharaj.

Obviously, he could neither write nor even sign the letter.

Here is Siva's reply:

OM Namo Narayanaya. Adorations and salutations. Thy kind letter. Sent a parcel of Ganges water, Prasad etc., Tulasi, Kumkum, bael, and Bhasma. Kirtan, Prayer, Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa, Archana are being conducted in the temple for thy peace. May Lord bless you.

Thou art a devotee of Lord Krishna. Thou hast done Jnana Yajna, by distributing freely Bhagavatam, etc. Thou hast acquired great merit. You need not be afraid. The celestial car will take you to the abode of Lord Krishna.....Sivananda.

And, explaining the significance, Siva said:

This is a branch office of Vaikuntha. People who wish to go to Vaikuntha may take their passport from here. If they get a chit from here, they will get ready admission.

Think of the amount of the Lord's service that is turned out here. Kirtan, temple Pujas, magazines, leaflets, books, attendance on visitors, Sadhus and the poor, Pitru Yajna, Jnana Yajna, and then the Japa, meditation and Swadhyaya of individual Sadhakas and common Satsang. Just think of the amount of service to humanity turned out every day. This service earns for us the privilege of direct communication with Lord Krishna, Lord Siva and Devi. We have only to send a chit to Lord Krishna-so-and-so is coming tomorrow-and His messengers will be ready with the Vimana (celestial car).

'Sri Ganapathirama Iyer has done great service. He has printed thousands of copies of a handy Bhagavatam-selected verses from it, with English translation-and has distributed them free to all devotees. That is charity of no mean merit. And, even in the last moments of his life, he does not forget the lotus feet of the Lord. That is the surest indication of the effect this Jnana Yajna has had on his Antahkarana. Such noble souls have no fear. Their places in Vaikuntha are reserved.'

27th SEPTEMBER, 1949

GLIMPSES OF EARLY LIFE

The thought of a young man crossing the sea and going over to Malaya to practise as a doctor there (especially when this event relates to the first quarter of this century, when South Indian Brahmins were highly orthodox) gives rise in us to the picture of an Indian of advanced views or 'cultured' (!) or 'civilised-all of which mean that the young man has imbibed many of the European customs and so is essentially unorthodox. Siva went over to Malaya from India, crossing the ocean. But he was none of these: he was, on the contrary, an orthodox South Indian Brahmin with just as much faith in his scriptures, and, as much regard for the ancient customs and manners of his community as had his contemporary who would have refused to travel by train or a motor-car. Hear what Sri K.S. Chellamier says. C. was Siva's school-mate. Siva chose to become a doctor: C. entered the Educational Service and retired from the Travancore Education Service as a Principal of a College.

Rev. Swamiji,

Do you remember our school days when we used to call you by your nick-name of 'Madisanchi?

'Madisanchi' is a South Indian expression for an extremely orthodox man. Madisanchi is a bag in which the orthodox Brahmin carries dry clothes, pure and unpolluted, as well as the paraphernalia necessary for applying the caste-mark. He would carry all these things to the bathing ghat. The bag is supposed to protect its contents from being polluted, either by a man who has not had a bath touching them, or someone else going near them.

Nowadays, when the majority of people belong to the 'civilised' group, it is easy to earn the title 'Madisanchi'. But in the days of Siva's boyhood, when most of the people of the South were orthodox, to earn this nickname, one had to live a rigorous (Puritanic) orthodox life.

A strict adherence to orthodox customs and manners is a part of Siva. Another part of his personality is unquestioning service. Service often swallows orthodoxy: but when this overwhelming consideration is not there, orthodoxy holds full sway. That is the secret. That is why this Madisanchi boarded the steamer unhesitatingly when the call of service was heard by him. On reaching the Malayan soil, orthodoxy was again resumed!

Even now, if a 'Chandala' comes to the dispensary to be dressed, Siva would very readily attend on him and would never consider himself polluted. But, when Vji offered to perform Archana to the Devi (during the Durga Puja at night), Siva stopped him: No, no: not with the shirt on. Tomorrow, take a bath specially before the Puja, apply Bhasma and Kumkum on your forehead and then do the Puja.'

29th SEPTEMBER, 1949

SECRETS REVEALED

A newspaper cutting from one of the Burmese papers, sent by a devotee from Burma, surprised us all. It contained the report of a gala opening ceremony of a Divine Life Society's branch at Singapore.

'One more lively centre for Divine Life!' commenced Siva. And, as he pushed up his spectacles above his forehead, we were ready and eager to listen to him.

There should be at least three people, able and energetic, to attend to the work of stirring up branches into intense activity. Regular despatches should go to the branches every month. Letters from branches should be answered promptly. Messages should be sent for the opening ceremony, anniversary, etc. Someone should keep track of the progress and inspire the branch office-bearers every now and then to greater and greater peaks of activity.

The institution has grown more rapidly than anyone could have anticipated. However many efficient workers come, we still find that we are short of workers and that everyone who works here is overworked.

The most important thing is to keep constant track of the work that is going on, and the persons that we come into contact with. My address-book helps me in that. You see: I have put the address-book under lock and key nowadays. It is the most precious thing for me. It is the channel through which I can serve the world. I have asked Purushotthamji to take particular care of the two trunks of

manuscripts in my Kutir. Even if there is a flood and all other things in my Kutir are destroyed, I will not allow these two trunks to be destroyed. Put me in a forest a hundred miles away from here: but give me my address-book and those two trunks, I shall begin all over again and build up the institution from there.

In the address-book, I have addresses of every sort of person-Ministers, Maharajahs, Mutts and Ashrams, Professors, Philosophers and Scientists. As soon as I get an address, my work begins. I may get the address in any manner through letters I receive from so many people, from the corners of journals that I get, from books that we get for review or as gifts for the library. I am always watchful for addresses. And the moment I get an address, I at once enter it in the register. Now, the man is registered. At once I write a letter, send a packet of leaflets, some books also, have the address entered in the magazine register and the issues of "The Divine Life' despatched to him, enter the name in the Prasad List, etc., etc. Previously, the moment I got an address, I will start a regular campaign with letters. On one day, the man will receive three letters. And, for the first two weeks, there will be a regular flow of divine life into his house. One day he will receive the magazine, the next day a letter, the third day a packet of leaflets, another day Prasad, then books and so on.'

OCTOBER, 1949

1st OCTOBER, 1949

YOU LIVE HERE?

Sri X desired to get Mantra Diksha from Siva. He went to Siva's Kutir on the bank of the Ganges early in the morning. Siva took him to the Ganges which flows kissing the walls of Siva's Kutir, and initiated him into the Lord's Name. Later the new disciple was entertained by the Guru (!) to a light repast.

Siva took him round the Kutir. 'It is a beautiful Kutir,' explained Siva before they entered Siva's apartments. It has a splendid view of the Himalayas and the Ganges. If you sit here on the verandah or even if you are within the rooms, you will constantly hear the Pranava-Nada of Ganga.'

They both went in and came out in a few minutes.

'You are living in this Kutir, Swamiji?' the visitor asked, obviously astonished at the fact. 'Why?: it is as ill-ventilated as a prison-cell. You cannot get any light in the rooms, except at midday. They are not rooms: they are caves, and too small even for that. And, you work in that room which is not sufficient to accommodate your manuscripts and books. You cannot move in it without treading on something or tripping over something else. The bed-room is damp and one cannot even breathe in it. I wonder how you live in it.

Though I get a positive feeling of spiritual elation while I am in the room, I think I will not be able to keep body and soul together for

six months if I lived in this Kutir. Why don't you change into a better suite of rooms, Swamiji?'

No, no: I am all right here,' replied Siva, the Mahatyagi and Mahatapasvi. The visitor bowed, again, in bewildered amazement, and left.

2nd OCTOBER, 1949

SANNYASA AND THE WORLD

Sri Sabha Ratnam Iyer, M.A., B.T., LL.B., of Nagpur, who came here to attend the birthday celebrations and who stayed on till Navaratri, met Siva early in the morning while the latter was coming to the office.

'When you go back to Nagpur, consider that you are already a Sannyasin and behave as such. Be unattached to the family. Are you ready for Sannyasa? Will you actually embrace Sannyasa now?' asked Siva characteristically taking the conversation to a climax.

I am ready, Swamiji. But, I have a few daughters to be married. That is the only responsibility. I feel it is a great burden, Swamiji. This family hinders my wholeheartedly plunging into Nivritti Marga.'

The world is no hindrance. Lord Krishna assures you in the Gita that one can be a true Sannyasi and a true Tyagi even while remaining in the world of active life. Live in the family: but let not the family live in you. Let your house be an Ashram. It will be your headquarters for the present. From there you will spread the message of divine life. Take Rama Nama from Mohalla to Mohalla. Inspire everyone. Conduct common meditation. God has given you a very good voice.

You can address an audience of 50,000 without a loud-speaker. Goddess Saraswati lives on your tongue: you have vast knowledge of the Puranas, the Gita, and other Sastras, too. You are a Sri Vidya Upasaka, too. Mother will surely bless you with Moksha. You have been here for some time. You know how to conduct Sadhana classes.'

'Yes, Swamiji: I shall certainly conduct classes in Nagpur on the same lines as the classes are conducted here. Especially, I liked very much the Rama-Nama Japa Kirtan that you conducted last night. The whole Hall was filled with Ram-Nama vibrations only. Everyone felt elevated. Incidentally, I saw on your forehead the digit of the moon, too, as is to be found on the forehead of Lord Siva. I have no doubt in my mind that you are Lord Siva Himself, Swamiji.'

(Incidentally, during his lecture-tours in the Punjab, as he was doing Kirtan and dancing one night, several devotees of the place saw a brilliant aura surrounding Siva. It was clearly visible to the naked eye of the devotees. All were thrilled: their devotion towards Siva increased: and Siva's divine life message, too, found ready receptacles in them.)

BHIKSHU REKHA ON THE FACE

'OM Namo Narayanaya,' Siva was at the office entrance. A few of us were just then coming out of the office on our way to the Kshetra for Bhiksha.

Though we did not mention the fact, Siva somehow knew it.

'What about the Bhiksha programme?' 'We are just now going, Swamiji.' 'No, no: you need not go. Your health will suffer: and consequently, the work will suffer. I see the Bhikshu-Rekha on your forehead. You need not worry now. Training or no training, you will always be prepared and capable of begging your Bhiksha.'

'As you wish, Swamiji,' we said and the idea dropped out of our head.

Incidentally, Siva told us a very interesting anecdote of his own life.

'When I was coming away from Malaya, bound for Banaras, someone met me on the ship and suddenly exclaimed: 'You have got the Bhikshu Rekha on your forehead. Even then he could find out that I would soon beg for alms and wander about. Soon afterwards, I reached Banaras and found that that man was right in his prediction.'

Sri Swami Chidanandaji had also joined us, then.

'Money or no money, you must take care of your body. If you are not looking after this instrument of the Lord, then you are not worshipping Durga properly. The best worship of Durga is to maintain this body in a proper condition, to enable it to work out His Will in the best manner possible.

When I was at the Swarg Ashram, I never touched oil. Now, I must keep several kinds of oil. All the cells are vibrating so fast that there is intense heat in the body. When I was at the Swarg Ashram, I slept on the floor. But, now I have got a nice bed: for that is essential for the work that has to be turned out. I do rough the body sometimes: and for the sake of keeping up the Titiksha, I rub the body against the walls. But often I do not have time even for that. There is work

to do. Service has a greater and more pressing demand on our attention. All that your body needs, you must give. You have practised enough Titiksha. If you go on in the same fashion, your body will break-down: you will become useless. You must take nutritious food. You are all gigantic brain-workers. You must have barrels of fruit-juices. Now, I have got twenty bottles of various medicines: some for my diabetes, some for my stomach, etc., etc. I have got different things for cleaning the teeth-tooth-paste, tooth powder, mouth gargle, etc.

'Nowadays we are not making any arrangement for people who would like to spend their days in exclusive meditation. Krishnanandaji, Achyutanandaji, and others like them should be at once provided with Kutirs where they can carry on their meditation, in seclusion. Premanandaji should also be given a room somewhere up the hill. He is greatly overworked. He needs immediate relief and rest. Food, milk, fruits, biscuits, coffee and tea everything that they need should automatically reach their Kutirs without their asking. We know their requirements and these should be provided.

'Money will come: money must come: very soon there will be crores and crores. You won't be able even to count the money. Big Seths and Zamindars will pick up the currency notes thrown away by you. Believe me: such a time must come. You can best help that if you all work hard. Every day our work is increasing. Every day more and more people are contacted by us. The message is spreading.

'Previously, I myself used to keep accounts. All the first account-books are in my handwriting only. In those days, I myself used to prepare the packets of leaflets and pamphlets for despatch. Every

day, we used to work far into the night, tying the packets. Now there are half a dozen people for this work. Those days, if someone gave us Rs. 25, we used to sit up the whole night and prepare a pamphlet for printing. Three petromax lights were burning in the Ashram when there was hardly enough food for all the inmates, when several inmates had to take Bhiksha from the Kshetras. Paramanandaji, Narayanaswamiji, Nijabodhaswamiji, Saswat-swamiji-all of us used to work the whole night: and early next morning, we would post all the packets.

Those days we had no accommodation either. The Dharmashala verandah was our Satsang Bhavan. One or two dilapidated Kutirs were all that we could live in. Slowly, we began to occupy the other disused rooms. It was all East India Co., business. We just got into the Kutirs and they were ours. We had then an income of about Rs. 50 a month. We had a debt of Rs. 17. When the income grew to hundreds, the debt also grew to hundreds. When the income grew to thousands, the debt-position also proportionately grew to thousands. We should not be discouraged. He is only training us. Later on, He will shower so much money on us that we will not be able to count it.'

3rd OCTOBER, 1949

WHERE IS THE SCORPION?

Someone noticed a scorpion outside the office. A few visitors crowded round the insect. One wanted it to be killed: another was too compassionate to allow that and said: 'Cut its tail and let it go.'

Siva heard this. 'Cut whose tail? The scorpion's? But, why don't you cut your tongue? Man's tongue is more poisonous than the scorpion's tail. See: the scorpion will not sting a man unless the man places his foot on it or in some way, intentionally or unintentionally, tries to harm it. But look at man himself. Without any provocation whatsoever, he will go out of his way and abuse someone, ridicule someone, vilify someone, injure someone. Man's tongue is much worse than the scorpion's sting."

Everyone was thrilled to listen to this inspired talk. And the scorpion (perhaps heaving a sigh of relief at Siva's advocacy of its cause) went its own way.

TENNIS AND SANNYASA

Winter has slowly set in, with its pleasant mornings and evenings. It is the time for games and body-building exercises. Siva and a few of us were on the terrace opposite the office hall. Govindaswamiji was coming towards the Ashram from Rishikesh. Siva remembered at once that he was one of the badminton players of the Ashram and that we used to play during the winter.

'Oh Govindaswamiji, it is time now to start badminton. Please arrange the court, and for the bats and balls. You are the captain.'

Then he turned towards us and said: 'Some people imagine that Sannyasins should not play tennis. I have no such notions. Sannyasa has nothing to do with what you need to keep this body, the temple of the Lord and the instrument for doing Karma Yoga, and Sannyasa should not prevent you from giving, within limits, what this body needs. Previously, I used to take a long evening walk. Work has

increased and this became impossible. And, even while doing the work, the pressure was too great and I needed relaxation every now and then. I got a tennis ball and a racket. I used to play on the wall for a few minutes. After these few minutes, I would be ready for another spell of Play, exercise, practice of work. Asanas and Pranayama-all are necessary. Even today, I do not miss my Asanas and Pranayama. Sitting on the bed, I perform some exercises; sitting on the bed, I do some simple Asanas and some Pranayama also. These things keep my body fit for the work that the Lord has entrusted to me. I keep His instrument clean and healthy.

Titiksha and self-denial are necessary. They are the most essential parts of one's Sadhana. Otherwise, one will be prone to commit mistakes, and one will become a luxury-lover. I have chronic lumbago. If you ask a doctor for his advice, he will forbid me from touching Ganges water. But I cannot live without bathing in the Ganges. I swim in the Ganges also. God knows my heart: therefore, He has somehow arranged that this Ganges bath should not affect my health.

This lumbago trouble does not allow me nowadays to serve food in the Pangat every day. But as a measure of Sadhana, and also as an exercise, I would often imagine a Pangat sitting on my verandah and begin serving them out of imaginary buckets of dall and vegetable in my hands, bending before each diner: 'Dall, Bhagavan' 'Vegetable, Bhagavan'. Sadhana should be intelligent. You should know what you wish to achieve through Sadhana. Then alone will Sadhana be fruitful. Be sincere in your aspirations. Then God will guide you from within what you should do.'

DOG OR GOD?

Swami Yoganandaji joined the party of Sannyasins listening to Siva's words of wisdom. Behind him ran a dog-also eager to join the group. Siva noticed the dog, and enquired: Is the dog all right now?'

Yes, Swamiji: the wound on its neck has healed completely."

Why not? Thanks to the ever-compassionate Chidanandaji, the dog received such treatment here as a Maharajah will not get at the hands of his own doctor and nurse. Every day he used to bandage it with his own hands, cleaning the wound with his own hands, unmindful of the nasty smell that the wound e nitted. No one but he could have done this. To him it was not a dog, but God Himself. His is a unique example of a saint seeing the same Atman in the Brahmin, the elephant, horse, pariah and a dog, as described by Lord Krishna in the Gita. All of you should learn this wonderful method of developing the heart and Adwaita-Bhavana. then cultivating the Only is Self-realisation possible."

Swami Yoganandaji then related how Siva himself used to do such Seva to cows, dogs and donkeys as an essential item of his Sadhana. 'Swamiji would invariably feed the monkeys of the locality, and the dogs and the cows, that would all crowd round him when he took food. Before he even sat for his dinner, he would take some food and feed the fish of the Ganges. Only then could he have his own dinner.

Service has ever been Swamiji's passion in life. Swamiji would handle dangerous cases of cholera and typhoid and serve the patients day and night, remaining with them and cleaning their bed-

pans with his own hands. Lepers, too, are his favourites: he takes the keenest interest in their welfare. By example and precept, he has taught us that serving every living being, without the least trace of Ghrina, hatred or ill-feeling, with heart full of love and Atma-Bhava, alone can purify the heart rapidly and make it a fit receptacle for Atma-Jnana.

THE GLORY OF THE THIRD EYE

Next to join the group was Hari Badri Narayan, the youngster from South Africa who is now studying medicine at the Lucknow University.

'Hariji, your lecture in the morning was wonderful. How fluently you speak both in English and in Hindi. You were too shy to speak even with friends, when you came here. Now you have become an orator. As soon as you go back to Lucknow, this time, you should organise the students of the Medical College and form a youth Section of the Divine Life Society. Hold Sunday classes. Teach the other boys Asanas, Pranayama and physical exercises. You will be doing a great service to these boys. And, you will also be getting the training necessary for you to become a first-class propagandist when you go back to Africa. You will be able to clarify your own ideas, too."

'Yes, Swamiji: I shall certainly do so. With your blessings, I am sure of success."

This young lad arrived at the Ashram in September 1947, along with Sri S.R. Padayachie of South Africa. He wanted to study medicine: but did not know what to do about it, Siva gave him shelter in his

own Ashram: and then wrote letters to several professors to get him fixed up in an Indian University. And. he was able to get a seat in the Medical College at Lucknow.

Siva found out his spiritual Samskaras, at the first sight. Through his 'third eye', he was able to detect that he would one day turn out to be a good preacher and so trained him in the art of speaking. Siva found out too that he was a good actor and gave him frequent opportunities of taking part in the dramas staged at the Ashram. What we see now with our two eyes, Siva could see long ago with his third eye.

Here is Bhat, our new inmate. He, too, took part in the Devi Mahatmya Drama. He acted wonderfully well. He is a first-class comic actor. Siva greeted him and said:

'Bhatji, you are the director of the dramatic society here. Don't feel shy to act in the Ashram plays. Don't think that it is against Sadhana to act in dramas. Think of the good that you are doing to the vast multitudes of spectators, when you act in a spiritual play. What a great learned man cannot do by a year's lecturing, you can do in a minute-you can drive your lessons directly into the spectator's heart and it will forever remain embedded there. That is the secret. The whole world is a big drama, a play kept up by the Lord Himself. You and I are already actors in this Play. We dance and sing as He makes us do. For a wise man, the world provides daily lessons. Why should you then feel shy to act a drama within this huge drama? Develop this faculty. You should hereafter organise a drama for every occasion.'

The rapidity with which Siva sees through the Third Eye, the inner contents of everyone, the hidden faculties, is really amazing. The moment he perceives the hidden faculties, he will do everything to bring them out: and a genius is born.

RESPECT AND REVERENCE: THEIR SEAT

Subramaniam was coming along the road on a bicycle when he found Siva emerging from his Kutir. At once, S. alighted from the cycle, took off the towel which he had wound round the head as a turban, and adjusted his Dhoti!

Siva smiled and said: 'All these formalities are not necessary for me. Love and respect have their seat in the heart: and you should have love and reverence for elders in your heart. That I will know! These external formalities do not have much significance for me."

LARGE HEART ATTRACTS, AND ENCHANTS

And, Siva continued: 'You are going about in the hot sun, making purchases at Rishikesh and supervising the construction work. Do not hesitate to take all that you need: you must have a cool drink now, and half an hour later, you should take a hot drink. If you feel like taking some fruits in the bazar, do not hesitate. You need not submit any bills even. You have perfect liberty to do everything to keep your body in perfect health.'

It is this freedom that Siva gives to everyone, and it is this Heart that treats every living creature as its own self; it is this universal love and cosmic consciousness that does not exclude any living creature-that attracts and enchants. Not like the big men who, as soon as they come to power, place themselves on a high pedestal of their own

construction and others on a lower level. If this great man takes the milk with almonds, he will not allow his subordinates to take even a cup of tea. He must take halwa: but his workers should be content with groundnuts. Not so with Siva: every worker in the Ashram is as important as his own self, to him. Therefore he treats everyone with the greatest consideration. This love, when it blossoms forth in the heart, attracts and enchants.

Incidentally, we are reminded of what Prof. Ganga Saran Seal said once. Prof. G. was a double-M.A. and a professor in Chandausi College. He was a great admirer of Siva, having known Siva during the latter's lecture tours in the Punjab. Once he remarked: 'Swamiji knows hypnotism. That is why thousands of people sit spell-bound, in pin-drop silence, listening to his lectures and Bhajans.

Otherwise, it is impossible nowadays to command the attention of such large audiences.' When this was brought to the notice of Siva, he merely said: 'I have not even read a book on hypnotism.'

And, in fact, he knows nothing about hypnotism: and he does not encourage anyone to learn this art, either. Siva does not like Siddhis: and he warns his students from running after occult powers. The one and the only secret of his is the secret of the heart-the love that he has in the heart, and that attracts people to him, and enchants them.

TELEPHONES AND FLOWER-VASES

Siva has decided to spend more time in the office: his work has tremendously increased. His bag is full of letters which he has to answer. There is a huge list of people that is always on the table, to whom he should send books. He has a register, a ledger, with a leaf

for every devotee to whom he sends books free. As the number grew, he prepared an index of these persons. And, as the number grew further, it was a problem. This register goes on serving its purpose: but now a consolidated list of the most important among the names in the register has been prepared and that is right in front of him on the table. On his left are the Big Address Book, the Free Issue Register and the Manuscripts Register. To the left of him, on a small table is a rack full of leaflets and pamphlets, wrapped up copies of the magazine, packed copies of photographs-all ever-ready to leap into his hands and to pass on to the world at large. These are his telephones-the Registers that connect him to anyone he likes-and these are his flower-vases-the magazines, the leaflets and the photographs that adorn his table. And, Siva, has decided to spend some more time at the table, unmindful of his own personal discomfort.

CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

And, so he emerged from his Kutir at 3 p.m. today, instead of the usual 4. He found Purushotthamanandaji's Kutir closed and bolted from inside. Siva will not knock, nor call out to P. No: he very quietly opened the outer gate and slipped out, lest P. should be disturbed. He had to dress the wound on his left-hand: but that he postponed to 4 p.m. when P. will get up. 'Purushotthamanandaji is taking rest. I will have it dressed when he gets up,' said he. What consideration he shows towards those who serve him. Anyone else in his position will shout from his own Kutir for the attendant.

This happened in October 1945, when I had just joined the Ashram. We were sitting in the office and chit-chatting. I occupied the room

just adjacent to the office: this room I had bolted from inside and gone over to the office. It was past noon. It was a very hot day: and so we had partially closed the office-door also. Someone else was taking rest in my room. Siva came with his usual 'Prasad'. He found my Kutir bolted inside. He did not call out: but he quietly went to the kitchen, handed over the Prasad to someone else: 'Give it to Parthasarathy when he wakes up. He is taking rest.' I was stunned when later I was told of this. What love and what consideration! The chela is treated with respect and consideration that is due to the Guru. The Guru carries Prasad on his own head and goes out in the hot sun to the chela's Kutir: and when the chela is taking rest, has the patience, tolerance and love not to disturb the young boy, but to ensure that the Prasad reaches him when he wakes up. I think no other man in the world will do that.

5th OCTOBER, 1949

TO YOUNG WIDOWS

Srimathi X, a young North Indian lady who had recently lost her husband in tragic circumstances, has come to Ananda Kutir for a brief stay in the belief and conviction that Siva's Darshan and Upadesh will remove her grief. She is a highly educated young lady, with advanced views on social matters: yet, she has to observe Purdah imposed upon her by family tradition.

Siva spoke to her as follows: You are an intelligent lady. The purpose of intelligence is proper discrimination. Try to discriminate between the Real and the unreal. Then, study Gita, especially the second chapter. You will clearly see that the physical love that you had towards the physical form of your husband was misplaced and

had to come to an end one day or the other. But if you love him in spirit: if you have spiritual communion with him: if you feel that your Self and his are one and the same, this love will be enduring, and the bliss that you obtain from it also will be ever-lasting. Then, you will realise that he has only changed his costume and taken a new suit. You will not grieve.

'Once you have laid this foundation of a spiritual understanding truly and well, the rest of the work will be easy. You have to keep yourself busy in humanitarian work, in selfless service of humanity with Atma-Bhava. Keep your body and mind constantly engaged in noble, divine and humanitarian service: this is the best way to ensure peace of mind and to remove grief.

Study Bhagavatam. You will find that the Lord has Himself stated there that He removes the pleasure-centres of Jivas when He chooses to shower His grace and blessings on the devotee. The mind will refuse to believe that what is generally considered a calamity is, in fact, a great blessing. The calamity shatters your belief in the permanence of things of the world: it points out clearly that everything here is fleeting and transitory. And, the calamity eventually turns your mind Godward: which, in turn, bestows peace and happiness on you. By diligent study of the Gita and other scriptures, and by proper discrimination, however, it is possible to bring your mind to believe in the existence of the Eternal Atman, and in the fact that all that happens here has the grace of the Lord behind it and so happens for your own good.

Therefore, plunge yourself in selfless service. Conduct common meditation classes. Organise Gita study circles amongst the people of your locality. Spread the glory of the name of the Lord.'

'But, Swamiji, even against my will, I have to observe Purdah. My family people will not allow me to move about freely. It was with great difficulty and in the teeth of heavy opposition that I could get through the B.A.'

'Well: even that need not worry you. Do what you can do, within the limitations imposed by external circumstances. Gather together a few girls of your locality and educate them, mould their character, and divinise them. Teach them Gita, Ramayana, etc. Make a beginning thus. When the Lord knows that your heart yearns to expand and to render selfless service of a divine nature to all humanity, He will Himself provide you with golden opportunities.

'Above all, be brave. Be cheerful. Develop the faculty of discrimination. Study and keep yourself absolutely busy. Train your children properly. Give them a spiritual turn of mind from the very beginning of their career. God will help you and guide you on your onward march.'

6th OCTOBER, 1949

MEET BANERJI OF KALIBARI

Judge Gauri Prasadji, Swami Chidanandaji, Swami Omkaranandaji and I were leaving for Dehra Dun this morning. Siva was on his way back to the Kutir from the morning class. We took leave of him and were about to get into the tonga. Siva then mentioned casually:

There is one Banerji of Kalibari. I was in that Kali Mandir for some days and performed Kirtan also. Do meet him and conduct Kirtan there. He is a very nice man.'

And, we left the Ashram.

As we entered the Rishikesh railway station, we were greeted by Sri Mamraj Sing of the Tehri Government. And, he joined our party, as he, too, was going to Dehra Dun.

We reached Dehra Dun.

M. Judge Saheb and Omkarji left immediately for the Court. At the Court, Judge Saheb could not find his own advocate-friends. Casually, M. took G.P. to an advocate whom the former had known. And, everything was fixed up.

In the evening, G.P. took Swami C. and me to see the Advocate. We met the young man, talked the matter over with him for over half an hour. His face clearly indicated that he was at the point of bursting forth with joy and with something that he wanted to say. At last he said it: 'I know Swamiji Maharaj.' We were surprised. 'I saw him when he was in the Satyasevashram at Lakshmanjhula. I was a young lad then.' His name which we had casually heard of assumed a new meaning for us. Instantly we shouted: 'Are you the Banerji of Kalibari?' He calmly said: 'Yes.'

Now we could connect up everything that had happened since this morning. How well Siva arranges every event in proper sequence! How miraculously his hidden hand guides us! Mamrajji whom we never expected, accompanied us to Dehra Dun. Why? In order to introduce us to the man whom Siva wanted us to meet. The two

Advocates that Judge Saheb wanted to meet were not in the Court. Why? Because, we were to meet the man whom Siva wanted us to meet.

The subject of the conversation then centred entirely on Siva and Banerji's meeting with him, twenty years ago.

'How hard he used to work', B. continued. 'Seva for him was second-nature. Seva was his great Yoga. Seva was the Open Sesame of the door to Liberation. Subsisting on the meagre Kshetra rations, he used to serve, serve and serve throughout the day. I met him along with my brother and family. During the course of the conversation we had with him, he asked me not to marry. I am now over forty: and I am still a bachelor and hope, by his blessings, to continue to be so. So strong was the impression created by his commands.'

We had Kirtan that night in the Kali Bari of the Kali temple.

12th OCTOBER, 1949

COLINS TURNBULL

Yet another student from the West-Colins Turnbull- has come to the Ashram to drink deep from the fountain of Light.

After the night Satsang, Siva turned to C.T. and said: 'Learn Sanskrit. Study the first and the second books of Bhandarkar. They will give you enough knowledge of the language to enable you to read the Vedantic texts in their original and appreciate their grandeur. You can do it in six months.'

'Yes, Swamiji. I have already begun learning Sanskrit.'

T. is leaving tomorrow and told Siva So.

'Come again. Come here whenever you want to take rest. This is your own home. From Banaras you can come here and spend your holidays here. Even from Scotland, you can fly to Rishikesh for a period of rest and meditation.'

As we were walking down the Bhajan Hall, Siva said: 'All the leaders in the West should learn philosophy. Even if they acquire a theoretical knowledge of philosophy, that will be sufficient to impel them to put into practice at least a little of it. That itself will enable them to give the proper lead to the people and to govern their countries properly.' After a moment's pause, he resumed: 'Philosophy must be made a subject of compulsory study in the schools. Only that can solve the problem. But, what an irony of fate! Whereas, India ought to have given the lead in this respect and by example inspired the western universities to introduce philosophy as a compulsory subject, she has herself banned the teaching of philosophy in her schools.'

16th OCTOBER, 1949

RECIPE FOR PEACE OF MIND

Sri R., an officer of the Government of India, has come.

He wears a worried look. A look at him will suffice to show that his mind is greatly perturbed.

Siva greeted him and made him sit. He found out the trouble that afflicted the visitor.

I come from....' began R.

Please have your bath in the Ganges,' interrupted Siva, unwilling to let R. remind himself of his mental condition, while he is in the Abode of Bliss. Then, kindly go up the hill. There is a beautiful temple dedicated to Lord Viswanath. Chant Rudram there. Recite Stotras also. Then go to the Bhajan Hall where the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan is going on for the last five years. Do Kirtan for an hour. By that time, food will be ready.'

R. was amazed at the programme that Siva had chalked out for him. Without another word, he left the Hall.

In the afternoon, R. met Siva in the office. He was a thoroughly changed person now. He was cheerful and in a very happy mood. As he came into the office, some Ashramites were taking Roneo-copies of the Forest University Weekly. R. took part in the work. When Siva came, he prostrated at his feet.

'Swamiji, this is really Ananda Kutir. Peace and Bliss reside here only.' Then he related his story. His duty is to bring to books bribe-takers and corrupt officers. In the discharge of his duty, however, he has to proceed against high officials. They dislike him. They make it impossible for him to carry on his work. They have forced him to go on leave. And, his conscience does not allow him to countenance dishonesty.

Siva told him: 'Lay your burden on His shoulders. He will help you. Be honest. Be truthful. If you feel that you cannot carry on due to unfavourable circumstances, resign. Take it as God's hint that you are to evolve rapidly in the spiritual path and that He intends you to do something worthier than toil in a Government office. Dedicate

yourself to some spiritual institution. Through the institution, serve humanity. You will attain Moksha.'

19th OCTOBER, 1949

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND CALCULATING BRAIN

An official of the Government of India and another from the Bihar Government were having an interview with Siva. The Govt. of India man wanted to know the essence of Vedanta and Siva's method of attaining cosmic consciousness. Siva said:

'Infinite expansion of consciousness is the goal of Vedanta. Aham Brahma Asmi. I am the infinite Brahman. Bhuma. Besides me, nothing else exists. I am the Soul of everything that exists. The actual realisation of this great truth is the goal of Vedanta.

'Mere study of texts dealing with Vedanta will not do. We must introspect and find out the draw-backs in us. A man will come to the Ashram and will stay here for three days. At the end of his stay, he will calculate thus: 4 as per meal, 6 meals come to 1.8. Tea and milk will cost me 1.8. And, then boldly come forward with a donation of Rs. 3! The very same man will not hesitate to spend 200 rupees on the purchase of a single saree to his daughter-in-law. That is 'my' daughter-in-law: this is 'an' Ashram. I should spend on something which is 'mine' but not on something which is other than 'mine'. So long as this attitude is there, how can cosmic consciousness dawn in him? Practical realisation of Vedantic truths is possible only if you give up all this petty-mindedness. Give your all to some good institution. Renounce. Renounce. Renounce. Give. Give. And give.

Then and then alone will your eyes be opened and then alone will you have cosmic consciousness or Brahma-Jnana.'

Surely, one who lives with Siva even for a few days, moves closely with him, watches every movement, every action of his closely and with inquisitive vision-he will not need a word from Siva's lips. For, Siva is a living commentary on the bold utterance of the Upanishadic seers, his very life and every-day actions will provide one with ample illustrations of what those sages must have meant when they uttered those great truths.

And, when Siva talks on Vedanta, he always gives it a practical turn. He has no patience for polemics.

HOW TO SERVE THE SICK?

'Oh Madi Swamiji, did you take the temperature of Balammal in the evening?' Siva asked, as he was coming out of the Bhajan Hall after the night Satsang.

'I did not go there in the evening, Swamiji.'

At once Siva went to the patient's room. And, he would not leave the place until every minute detail in connection with the patient's requirements had been attended to.

Siva, then, said: 'Put yourself in the patient's place. That is the best way to ensure attention to the minutest details. If you consider that you are the doctor, you will neglect some things. Even if you consider yourself a nurse, you will miss or forget some things. Think for a moment that you yourself are the patient. What are the

things you will need? See that all those things are available to the patient. You must enter into the patient's spirit. That is real service.

There must be a bed-pan. This is most important, especially in the case of aged patients, like this lady. There should be light, matches, water in a bucket and a tumbler. All these things should be neatly arranged in the room so that the patient can reach out to them without much difficulty. You should pay particular attention to the arrangement of the bed. Even the slightest carelessness in this regard will deprive the patient of nature's most powerful remedy-sleep. Haphazard making of the bed will not do. What might be a mild discomfort to a healthy man will be unbearable horror to a sick man-bear this always in mind.

Viswanathan and Ramakrishnan are training themselves in service. They have willingness to learn. They have eagerness to serve. You should not lose one opportunity of service. Then and then alone will this selfless service become a part of you.

Lord Dattatreya says in the very first Sloka of the Avadhuta Gita that Adwaitic realisation is impossible for one unless there is God's grace. God's grace can be obtained only through sincere, untiring selfless service and Upasana. Service of the sick is the greatest form of selfless service, which will at once clean the heart and invoke God's grace into it.'

24th OCTOBER, 1949

THE LESSON WOMAN NEEDS MOST

Three Siamese girl-students of Banaras University have come to the Ashram to stay for a couple of days and learn what they could, of

Siva and his philosophy. Siva entertained them nicely on their arrival: gave them several books with his autographed blessings: and after they had listened to the Gramophone records of Siva's Kirtans, had them taken round the Ashram. They were shown the Yoga Museum also.

In the course of their conversation with Siva, he told them: The impact of Western civilisation on Eastern culture has had the baneful result of making the Eastern men and women worship their body instead of the soul. This is especially true of the ladies. They spend all their time in beautifying their body. In spite of all the beauty-aids, no one will be able to prevent old age and death. In a moment, all this physical beauty will vanish. Feel and realise that real beauty is in the Soul or the Atman alone. All other beauties are evanescent. Therefore, do not attach much importance to them. Meditate on the Atma, the Beauty of beauties. This Atma is imperishable: therefore, the attention that you bestow on It will be really worthwhile. The Atma never ages: It never dies. Realise this Truth. Then, and then alone have you learned to beautify yourself really and truly.'

FOOD AND THE EATER ARE ONE

During the night Satsang, a South Indian devotee recited a Mantra from the Sama Veda: 'Aham Annam, Aham Annadah'. After he had concluded, Siva explained the significance, in a few words, especially for the benefit of the Siamese visitors.

The Vedic seer has, at a moment of Cosmic Consciousness, ecstatically sung: 'Oh I am the food. I am the eater of the food.' This only goes to prove that in reality, the objects and their enjoyer

within are one and the same, and that the duality and plurality that are perceived through the senses are false and illusory.

'Once this truth is recognised, and one comes to feel the oneness of the objects and the enjoyer, then desire for objective enjoyment will vanish. True Vairagya will dawn in man. He will yearn to perceive and realise that Seer within, that Enjoyer within Who Himself is All. When desires have vanished and Para Vairagya dawns in man, he soon crosses beyond Maya and Samsara and attains Nirvana very soon.'

OM MANI PADME HUM

Such is the catholicity of Siva and his consideration for the views and feelings of others, that today, at the end of his Kirtans and Bhajans (in the course of which he had chosen to include many of his songs and poems on Vairagya and Vedanta), he included along with his Maha Mantra Kirtan, the Buddhistic Mantra, also (in the same tune):

Om Mani Padme Hum, Mani Padme Hum, Mani Padme Hum, Mani Padme Hum.

25th OCTOBER. 1949

ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO MOSS

Sri Swami X's eagerness for the Parivrajaka life brought forth the following Upadesha from the lips of Siva:

'An occasional spell of Parivrajaka life is no doubt very good as a measure of discipline. If you are vigilant, you will be able to learn many good lessons during the wanderings, and you will be able to

cultivate perfect and unconditional self-surrender to the Will of the Lord.

'But the present-day world is not suitable for a Sannyasin taking for ever to the Parivrajaka life. In days of yore, Paramahamsas who had had Atma Sakshatkara wandered about fearlessly: their bodily needs were attended to by the householders, and, they in their turn, blessed the householders, gave them spiritual instruction and thus carried out the Will of the Lord and preserved Dharma. Such Self-realised Parivrajakas are rare nowadays. The people, too, have lost the reverence which their ancestors had towards Sannyasins. Therefore, such Parivrajaka life, nowadays, is fraught with dangers and temptations.

You cannot practise much Sadhana during your Parivrajaka life. Morning till evening you will be concerned about yourself. Walking and walking will make you tired: and the rest of the time you will only worry about your food. You cannot do much selfless service. You cannot practise much Dhyana, either. Stick to one place. Serve the humanity from there. Purify the heart through service and worship. Meditate and realise.

WHY SIVA CAME TO RISHIKESH?

'When I came away from Malaya and took to the wandering life, I was soon tired of it. I wanted seclusion and meditation-which were hard to get during the wandering life. I wanted books for study. I found out that these three things were essential for a Sadhu if he was to carry on his spiritual practices-service, Bhajan, and meditation-uninterruptedly, viz., food, medical care and library. I went to many places on the way. But none of them satisfied me, till I reached

Rishikesh where I found all the three, besides a most wonderful and delightful place for Dhyana. When you find such a place, always stick to it and never move from there. Find out every opportunity of serving humanity. Watch, watch, and watch. Serve and then do Bhajan: then serve again. Then meditate-go on rotating these three. You will have rapid spiritual progress.'

27th OCTOBER, 1949

SADHU ELEMENT vs BABU ELEMENT

Sri S. and Sri J. have left the Ashram. Another Ashramite had also been instigated by Sri J. to leave the Ashram, but had a miraculous escape as he had to go to Dehra Dun on the appointed day. When the matter was brought to Siva's notice by this Ashramite, with the request that he, too, might be allowed to follow them for a short while, to help them settle down somewhere, Siva gave us the following Upadesha:

I thought that Sri J. was a quiet worker and efficient. He appeared to be very good, simple and humble: but now he has proved that his inside was filled with venom. It was God's grace that has saved you. He has not only ruined himself, but has done a great disservice to Sri S. and the Ashram, too, by enticing Sri S. also away.

'Only people with good, spiritual Samskaras will stay here. Others will go away. You will not find a place like this anywhere else in the world. You have all conveniences here plus Ganges, Himalayas and seclusion. A good library, a dispensary, temple, Bhajan Hall, food and clothing everything you have here. You have splendid opportunities of serving humanity. Identify yourself heart and soul

with the institution. Make it your own. If they have gone, do not bother yourself now. What have you to do with them? If they have been courageous enough to go away, they will have the capacity to settle themselves down. You need not run after them. Why: I am here: and your own institution is here, which serves humanity. Why not help it instead of trying to help runaways?

'God knows who are to stay here. He is the Antaryamin. People like Sri S. and J. may be good workers: but they do not have spiritual Samskaras. They have not got the Sadhu element.

You may be a very good worker. You may be a brilliant scholar. You may be able to recite the Gita, Upanishads and Brahma Sutras from end to the beginning. You may be an expert in Hatha Yogic Kriyas. All these are no good if you do not possess the Sadhu-element. What is the use of study, meditation, and bead-rolling? What is the use of standing upside down for three hours? Remember, this point very well: if you do not have the Sadhu-element, you are a failure as a Sannyasin.

The Sadhu-element is a peculiar mixture of various noble qualities. It is an indescribable something which you will recognise at once when you see the man who has it. It is comprised of humility, fortitude, forbearance, forgiveness, tranquillity, spirit of service, adaptability, cheerful surrender to the will of the Lord, freedom from anger, lust and greed, a complete absence of the complaining spirit. One who has the Sadhu-element in him will be ever joyful and he will take everything calmly-'Everything is God's grace'. He will have no occasion to complain.

The Babu-element, on the other hand, will have nothing but complaint. If there is a little less sugar in the tea one day, if tea is given late one day, he will fly into a rage. He will be a cut-throat. His heart will be full of hatred, jealousy, greed and lust. He always hankers after power and prestige. He is fond of back-biting, scandal-mongering, plotting and diplomacy. He has a vigorous scheming brain. He is selfish, selfish and selfish to the very core of his being. When you move with him for a couple of days, you will at once know his nature: beware of such people!

'All your Sadhana should be directed towards the development of the Sadhu-element in you, and the eradication of the Babu-element. You may be an illiterate man, unable even to talk a few words: but, if you have the Sadhu-element preponderant in you, you are a sage!'

We were all thankful ito Sri J. who was instrumental in providing us with this rarest treat from Siva's lips.

NOVEMBER, 1949

4th NOVEMBER, 1949

HOW CAN I HAVE RAM'S DARSHAN?

Sri R.P. who has been placed in charge of the Publication League, felt a bit nervous and diffident about his capabilities. He felt that it was too much of a responsible position for him to occupy with success.

As Siva entered the Office, Sri R.P. caught his eye. 'Ohji, don't be afraid of the work. I have written to Sri Mohindra and if he agrees we shall employ him as the Manager of the League. You can also assist him and get yourself thoroughly trained by him.

'Don't be afraid of work. Don't try to run away from it. You have a sweet voice: you have nicely developed the poetic faculties. You have great devotion to the Lord also.

'Know that the best way to attain the Lord is through work and work alone. Go and remain in a cave for twelve years without doing any work. Then come back and tell me whether you have improved or degenerated. Work here ceaselessly: and do one Mala of Japa. Find out for yourself which method helps you evolve more quickly in the spiritual path. Even if you remain in a cave for twelve years, you cannot have Darshan of the Lord. But, if you serve selflessly, work and work ceaselessly, and in the intervals do Japa of the Lord's name for some time daily, the Lord will at once come to you. When selfless service has purified your heart, even before you finish the first Mala of Japa, the Lord will appear before you.

'You do not have the vision to see what a great and soul-elevating power this service has. If only you are able to see the actual change in your heart that this service brings about, and if you are mentally able to compare this with the change that cave-dwelling will bring about, then you will at once agree with me. It is lack of this knowledge that makes you dread work. It is that which makes you feel that work is waste of time and that God can be attained only through parrot-like repetition of a Mantra.

'Go and see the Sadhus who live an idle life. They have no care. They have no responsibility. They will pretend that they have attained a very high stage when they ought to give up work. All that they are concerned about is their daily Bhiksha. They can get up at 9 a.m. and prepare to go to the Kshetra. Come back, take the food and sleep. Wake up again for Bhiksha. That is their life. Man's very nature is Tamasic. You have to conquer that through intense selfless service. Then Satva will supervene.

'It is this Tamas that prompts you from within to shirk work. It is Tamas that prompts you to go away and lead an independent life. You are sure of free food from Kshetras. This free food system should be stopped altogether. It is this alone that encourages man to revel in his Tamasic indulgence.

'You should become a dynamic Yogi. Work alone will enable you to control your mind, to banish evil thoughts from the mind and to purify the heart. In a purified heart alone will the Lord reveal Himself. Look at me. There is 8 per cent sugar in my urine. I have so many other physical ailments. I cannot even stand for an hour at a stretch: I feel giddy. Yet, I have been working till now. You have all

taken your food. But, here I am still at my work. It will take two hours for me before I can take my food.

You are a good worker, no doubt. But, you feel diffident. That diffidence you can conquer only when you take intense joy in service. You should love to undertake responsible work. You wish to realise God: but can you for a moment think of God's Great Responsibility? You are afraid of this petty work. And, yet, you wish to realise Him Who bears the burden of protecting and maintaining the whole universe. You think that work will interfere with your meditation. Read the life of any saint. You will find that he has practised and preached selfless service. Everyone has worked till the very end of his life. Such should be your attitude. Then and then alone can you have Darshan of Lord Rama in a minute.'

12th NOVEMBER, 1949

YOGA-HOW MANY YEARS' COURSE?

The Jnana Yajna, according to Vedic rituals, conducted by Sri R. Ananthakrishna Sastri, was in progress in the temple.

Two European (Swiss) tourists came to the temple to have Siva's Darshan. They had noticed, on the road leading to the temple, a big sign-board bearing the words Yoga-Vedanta Forest University'. They had also seen the University's Weekly magazine. The first question that came to their lips when they met Siva was: 'How long does it take one to complete the Forest University Course on Yoga and Vedanta?'

Siva's reply was quick: 'A life-time.'

'What!'

Yes: if you are to pass the final test of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, which is Self-realisation, you have to dedicate your life to the study and practice of Yoga and Vedanta. It will not do just to read a few books and vomit the knowledge on your answer papers at the Examination and feel mightily pleased with yourself, thinking I am a great Yogi now'. Yoga and Vedanta should become part and parcel of your very being. You should not only know intellectually what Vedanta says, but you should actually feel and realise for yourself the Truth about which Yoga and Vedanta preach.'

'What a great difference between the Western universities and this one here!' thought the Europeans and went their way, bowing in humility before the great sage Siva.

24th NOVEMBER, 1949

WORLD PACIFISTS AT ANANDA KUTIR

At 9 a.m. two ladies Mrs. Mildred Fahrni and Mrs. Magda Trocme, delegates to the World Pacifists Conference, came into the Office, accompanied by Sri Narayan of the Pashulok Ashram.

Siva's hospitality-machine was at once set in vigorous motion. It started with fruits, biscuits and tea and ended with a spoonful of Chyavanaprash. The ladies liked this immensely: and Siva gave them a tin each. He looked at Mrs. Fahrni's hair and remarked: 'Do you use hair-oil?' and without waiting for an answer, quietly passed on a bottle of the Brahmi-Amla oil. 'Besides serving as hair oil, it will cool the brain and increase your brain-power.'

Gramophone-Siva sang The Song of lties' to the right of the ladies. From their left, too, they heard the same song. Bewildered, they looked this side and that. The Two Sivas sang into the ladies' heart from either side.

Siva had, in the meantime, passed on a number of books, specially autographed by him, to the ladies.

Padmanabhan was very busy taking photographs and movie-films, too. Mrs. Fahrni, a camera-enthusiast, noticed this. As soon as we walked out of the D.J. Hall, she said: 'Now, may I take a snap of you, Swamiji?' Siva posed for a picture: then, all of us did so, too. We went to the Yoga Museum. The lay-out of the Museum was explained to them. They listened to the explanation with eager interest.

Then we went to the Art Studio and Mrs. Mildred was absorbed in the study of the huge albums of photographs that had accumulated there. One album contained a photograph of Siva in the Purvashram in Malaya. 'Is this you, Swamiji?' asked Mildred, apparently puzzled at the difference between then and now.

Yes, yes. I was very thin then!' said Siva. Thinness and fatness belong to the body. The soul is bodiless.'

From there we went to the Bhajan Hall. Siva explained: 'Here the Great Mantra is continuously repeated throughout the day. That has been going on for the last six years. This Mantra occurs in the Upanishads. It is in praise of the Lord. It is very potent. It is said that in this Iron Age, the repetition of this Mantra alone will lead one to God-realisation.'

Siva asked a young Brahmachari to chant Sri Rudram. This is a Vedic chant in praise of Lord Siva. All His attributes are enumerated. A very significant thing about this chant is that He is considered as the Best of everything good and bad. That is to point out to us that the same Consciousness pervades all that is good and all that is (or, more accurately, seems to be) bad, too. That should be the attitude of the wise man.'

Do you worship only Hindu gods here, Swamiji?' asked Mrs. Trocme.

'No, no. I sing the names of all gods of all religions, all prophets and saviours. See: here we have the picture of Lord Buddha. There you see the picture of Lord Jesus, that of Guru Nanak, etc. On every Thursday night (Guru Day), I sing the names of all these saints and prophets. So saying, Siva sang the following Kirtan:

Bhajo Lord Jesus Bhajo Mother Mary

Bhajo St. Francis, Bhajo St. Joseph

Bhajo Lord Buddha Bhajo Lord Mahaveer

Bhajo Guru Nanak Bhajo Ahur Mazda

Then we went to the temple. Siva explained to them the significance of the Prasad.

'Prasad is the sacred offering to the Lord of Bhasma (holy ash) and Kumkum (vermilion), as well as bael leaves.

The offering is accompanied by powerful Mantras. The Prasad is, therefore, very potent. Devotees who have faith in the Prasad derive

great benefits from applying this Prasad on their forehead. Incurable diseases are cured, often, by the mere use of this Prasad. Besides, bael leaf is good for diabetes.'

As we were coming out of the temple, the entire group was photographed. Mrs. Magda said: 'Swamiji, this is the best place in the whole world. Not only is the scenery superb, but the holy vibrations here are full of peace, bliss and calm.'

25th NOVEMBER, 1949

R.A. SASTRI

Sri R. Ananthakrishna Sastri who has been conducting a series of lectures on the Upanishads, concluded it today, as he is leaving for Delhi the day after tomorrow.

With his characteristic forethought, Siva had arranged for taking due advantage of the occasion to honour the noble Sastrigal.

As soon as the Sastrigal had concluded his day's discourse and also announced that it was his last at the Ashram during his present visit, Siva garlanded him with a suddenness that literally unnerved R.A.S. S. was trembling with emotion at this great honour shown to him by a sage. Before he could give expression to his sentiments, Siva, with remarkable cool-headedness, began:

It is a rare good fortune for us all to have been blessed with Sri Sastriji's Satsang for the past nearly a month. We are thankful to God for this. To Sri Sastriji, we owe a deep debt of gratitude lor taking the trouble of delivering his learned discourses every day.

We have many lessons to learn from him. First and foremost is his punctuality. It is a virtue which every spiritual aspirant should possess in abundance. Without punctuality and regularity in Sadhana, no progress is possible.

'Sri Sastriji has developed Titiksha to an extraordinary degree. During his pilgrimage to the North Pole region where he worshipped the sun all the twenty-four hours, in that icy cold region, he broke the ice and took his bath in the cold water early in the morning. Even here, he was regular in his early morning bath in the Ganges. It requires great will-power to do so. And, this will-power is developed through systematic and persevering effort. Steady application to the task you have undertaken will crown your efforts with sure success.

The great service that Sri Sastriji has rendered to the cause of the preservation and popularisation of old manuscripts, is unimaginable. To the Sadhakas all over the world, especially his researches into our ancient scriptures have been invaluable. He has (so to say) given a new life to Suta Samhita. He has translated this great scripture into Tamil also. He has translated several great Sanskrit works into English.

Look at his zeal for service, his intense desire to share with others the knowledge that he possesses. Even at the ripe old age of 85, he is still delivering fiery lectures on the Upanishads. You should all strive to emulate his glorious example. May God bless Sri Sastriji with many more years of service to humanity. May God bless you all.'

As we left the Hall, Sri S. remarked: 'Swamiji, when you showed me that honour, put a garland round my neck and spoke about me, I was simply trembling with emotion. I did not know what to do. I was practically not myself. I was as it were in a different world altogether.'

In the evening Sri S. had arranged to perform ceremonial worship of the Ganges. At four, the Ghat had been nicely cleaned and all the Ashramites had taken their seats beautifully on the steps. Siva was there, too. S. and his wife began the worship. Siva was intently watching the process.

'One year's daily ceremonial worship of the Ganges like this is equal to one week's whole-hearted service to a typhoid patient, washing his clothes and removing bed-pan. Such service will at once purify the heart and bring about inner illumination.' and added after a few minutes: 'Nurses serve the patients in the hospitals. But there is no inner purification for them, because they do not have the proper Bhavana when they serve.'

Siva then noticed some inmates had also joined in the worship and were offering bael leaves to Ganga.

'Each person is offering only his own bael leaf to the Ganges. What a grand thing would it be if one has the real inner feeling that He alone offers the worship through all hands. How much more effective will that worship be.'

This last remark contains the very essence of what Siva is. He constantly identifies himself with the Supreme Consciousness in a fraction of whose reflected light numberless universes exist. He

knows' that He and He alone works through all: and because of the depth of his realisation of this truth, he does work through all. That is for a Siddha.

DECEMBER, 1949

4th DECEMBER, 1949

THE UNCHANGING ONE

Sri V.G. Garde and Srimathi Leelavathi have come from Roorkee. These two noble souls who have dedicated their lives to Siva, their beloved Guru, have been frequently visiting the Ashram for the last several years. Their devotion to Siva is ever on the increase. Behind all the phenominal growth of the Society and the Ashram, they only see the miraculous hand of Siva, and their devotion to him becomes more intense.

As the couple sat near Siva in the office and were being entertained by him to a light repast, Siva pointed out to some of the Ashramites standing around them: 'Do you know him? Do you know the other man? He might be new to you,' and 'You find many new faces in the Ashram. You find that several old people have gone away. You find so many changes. But, there is one unchanging element here.'

'Yes, Swamiji. And, that is yourself. It is only this unchanging element in the Ashram that has enabled all this work to go on smoothly and efficiently in spite of the constant change here. It is this unchanging One that gives strength and power for the changing ones to carry on the work.'

GOVERNMENT vs ASHRAM

Sri B.M. Maheshwari, Addl. District Magistrate, Tehri, walked into the Hall as Mr. and Mrs. Garde were preparing to go round the Ashram. While taking his tea, Sri B.M.M. explained to a Swami

who had come along with him the most noteworthy features of the Ashram, especially the Yoga Museum.

Siva interrupted him and said: 'We have now got a generator with the help of which we are able to project 8 and 16 mm movie films. We have got a lot of films depicting the activities of the Ashram. Padmanabhan has gone to Patna. As soon as he comes back, I will send word to you. You can see the films. You will greatly enjoy them.'

'I would love to, Swamiji. And, I shall bring with me a reel of movie-film which we took on the occasion of the State's merger with the U.P. We have not so far been able to see the film for want of a projector. I shall bring it with me and we shall project it here.'

I AM EVER WITH YOU

After selecting the site for the construction of a temple to house Siva's marble image, and asking Mr. Garde to prepare a plan, Siva was leaving for his Kutir. Mr. and Mrs. Garde were going to Lakshmanjhula. 'Swamiji, perhaps we may not see you again before we leave. We shall take leave of you.' They prostrated.

I am always with you,' said Siva, hinting that the union of Guru and disciple is an eternal union of souls.

10th DECEMBER, 1949

THEN AND NOW

Sri C.V. Narayana Iyer has come. Siva greeted him cordially. N. prostrated before Siva.

'Ready?' queried Siva omitting even his usual formal enquiries.

'Yes, Swamiji, even this very moment.'

'Oh yes. The time has come now. Guruwara is the best day. Then let it be next Guruwara (Thursday). Subhasya Sheeghram: auspicious things must be done quickly, without procrastination.' And, Siva added, after a pause, 'No, no. Why not tomorrow itself? Tell Krishnanandaji to get everything ready. We will have it done with proper Viraja Homam etc'

Thus, within a few minutes of his arrival at the Ashram, Sri N. got Siva's permission to be initiated into Sannyasa.

N. had recently written to Siva and got a ready answer: Yes, I. will give you Sannyasa. Kindly come.' The word 'kindly' moved N. He said to me: 'Perhaps it may be possible for a few aspiring souls to become a great Yogi like Swamiji. A few might even be able to do dynamic selfless service to humanity, like Swamiji. But this humility-cum-love it is impossible for one to develop. He does not write 'You may come': or 'Come': but 'kindly come' as though he deems it a favour done to himself.'

C.V.N. also confessed to Siva: 'I was not ready for Sannyasa when I came last time. I had not fully discharged my worldly duties. And, I had several worldly ambitions. So, you sent me back. Now, the time has come. You have called me to yourself.'

SIVA NEVER FORGETS HIS LESSONS

He is a wise man who learns from others' experiences: a mediocre who learns by his own: a fool who learns from neither.

Ramakrishnan was explaining to Siva the location of the Bharati Memorial at Ettayapuram. Siva was trying to remember the topography of the place. When R. described the location of a street, Siva at once identified it:

'Oh yes, yes. That was the street in which all the houses were once destroyed. There were many thatched huts in that street. Next to it was the bazar. One of the shops caught fire, and the fire soon spread to all the thatched houses on that street. The entire thing was reduced to ashes in no time.'

Siva's recollection of this incident is significant. He remembers other things about Ettayapuram only vaguely: but remembers the fire that destroyed the thatched huts very vividly. And, this incident taught him a lesson: 'Never build a thatched hut. Nothing in it is safe." To this day, even the gods cannot persuade him to build a thatched shed for any purpose even to provide a closed room for the purpose of stocking bricks.

11th DECEMBER, 1949

RAGHAVACHARYAJI'S BIRTHDAY

One has to learn from Siva the art of constructive thinking and acting. No looking back or thinking of pros and cons or vascillating: but sheer good action and that, too, without any premeditation.

In the afternoon at about 3, Siva was told that today the Darshana Maha Vidyalaya people are celebrating Sri Raghavacharyaji's birthday. This 'shortness' of notice could not disconcert Siva. At once he said: 'Please see if there are fruits in the kitchen. If not, ask someone to go to the bazar immediately and get fruits. Bring a

plateful of fruits, nuts, and also ten rupees. Ask Padmanabhanji to clean a petromax to be sent to the Vidyalaya for the evening function.'

Within ten minutes, the fruits; money, etc., were brought. Siva added, to this, a Hindi book of his also.

In the evening, Siva went to the Vidyalaya to take part in the celebrations.

During the course of his address to the disciples and devotees of Sri R., Siva observed:

I have been repeating year after year my suggestion that the immediate disciples of Sri Acharyaji should sit down and commence the great work of writing his biography. It is the disciple's duty to his Master, There is another, and a more important aspect to this work. It is the spiritual. Your quest is to find out that something which really exists, as distinct from that which does not exist, but appears to be. Existence never ceases to be. During your waking state, you see the diverse phenomena. During the dreaming state, the external vision vanishes: but you see the diverse phenomena in your own mind. But, again, in deep sleep, both these phenomena disappear altogether and you pass into a state of unity within yourself. The outside world is altogether lost to you. Yet, when there is not the slightest pleasure derived from external objects, you derive an intense inner bliss. When you wake up, you feel that you slept soundly and therefore experienced an inner joy. But, during this deep sleep state, when you pass into that unity, you are not conscious of the state. Ignorance veils you. If you can consciously bring about that state of unity within yourself, withdraw your mind

from the Indriyas and direct all your attention to your Self, then you will consciously experience the state of bliss called Samadhi.

That is the real state of everyone. There is no duality in that state. Therefore, the Reality is One only. When you celebrate the birthday of Sri Acharyaji, you should feel that you are worshipping that Inner Reality, your own Self. The consciousness of this Self is more fully awakened in the Jnani than in a worldly man. That is the difference. Therefore, the worldly man and the aspiring baby-souls, when they thus worship the Jnani, get an opportunity of thinking of him and meditating upon him, thus stirring within themselves a desire to become like the Jnani. You worship that Consciousness today. That Consciousness will bless you and fulfil your spiritual ambitions. That Consciousness will show you the way to the annihilation of ignorance. That is the secret of celebrating the birthday of saints. Saints are not in need of your honouring them. They are beyond honour and dishonour. They are here only for your sake. If you worship them with Bhava and devotion, you get in tune with their heart and thus obtain their grace through which you can realise your own Self. If in that spirit you begin to write Sri Acharyaji's biography, you will be greatly benefited in your spiritual evolution.'

12th DECEMBER, 1949

GOPAL KRISHNAN

We had intimation from the local police that Sri Jyoti Prasadji, the District Magistrate of Tehri, will be paying a visit to the Ashram this morning.

And, he brought with him Sri Gopal Krishnan, the Finance Secretary of the U.P., Mrs. Gopala Krishnan and children.

Siva would not listen to their plea that they had just had their tea before they left Narendranagar. They took the tea as Siva's Prasad.

All the visitors eagerly listened to the gramophone records of Siva's speeches and Kirtans.

Four people were busy, in the meantime, assisting Siva in making his great gift of Vidya to the visitors. One Sadhaka ran to fetch the books, another gave them to Siva, a third was noting down the names of the books presented, and a fourth was ready to pack them up. Thus the books were autographed, presented to the visitors and later packed up neatly in bundles-all within a few minutes.

You have given us a library of books,' remarked Mrs. G., who was amazed at the rapidity with which the books flowed.

Siva autographed a few books for Sri J.P. also. 'Perhaps, I have them, Swamiji.'

'If you have them, then give these to your friends,' replied Siva whose zeal for dissemination of spiritual knowledge at any, is unequalled.

Siva then took them to the hall adjoining the office. He invited them to take their seats on the cement benches there and enjoy the lovely view of the Ganges and the Himalayas. They all sat drinking deep the beauty of Ananda Kutir scenery, and Siva rejoiced at their joy.

You must come here and stay for a week. Then you will really enjoy the real beauty of the place which is filled with a kind of ineffable peace."

'Do you allow laymen also to stay here, Swamiji?' asked Mrs. G.

'Oh yes,' replied Siva, and added after a pause, 'the layman is the saint of the future.' As he said this, one could readily see that he had suddenly receded far, far from away those around him, though for all outward appearances, he still appeared to be standing close-by. He had travelled many planes of consciousness and reached the one where saints and sinners, men and women, animals and mankind, had all lost their individual identity and become one. He seemed to say: 'It is all a question of awakening the consciousness. When It is veiled, a man is a sinner or a layman. When It is unveiled, he is a saint.'

And, the party led by Siva wended its way up the hill. As we neared the foot of the proposed stairway to the Mandir, Siva informed J.P.: There is a proposal to construct steps from here right up to the Mandir up the hill,' and added, turning to the Finance Secretary, Sri G., 'But it is waiting for finance.'

'An institution like this, rendering such invaluable service to the nation by the preservation of her culture, ought to get a substantial aid from the Government of the country,' remarked Sri J.P.

Mr. and Mrs. G. evinced great interest in the Kaivalya Guha construction. It was explained to them that Siva used to meditate in the cave during summer afternoon. 'A lovely place full of peace,' remarked Mrs. G.

From a saint's cave-dwelling, the party went straight into the Ashram's Cinema Hall where they witnessed a movie-film depicting Siva's daily life. The entire party was agreeably surprised to see that the Ashram combined the most ancient with the most modern, so beautifully.

As we were returning from the Mandir, Padmanabhan was ready with his Speedgraphic. This disciple of Siva would not wait for the party to 'organise themselves' before he snapped, and there were just enough seconds for Mrs. G. to be requested to face the camera when the shutter clicked.

'Mr. and Mrs. Gopala Krishnan would love to possess a memento of their visit to the Ashram,' remarked Sri J.P.

'Certainly, and to have a photograph with Swamiji amidst us is such a precious memento,' agreed Mrs. G.

As the party bowed to take leave of Siva, he said: 'Please take them and show them the Gita Bhavan also.'

You have just said what we have been thinking of, Swamiji,' said Sri J.P., surprised that Siva should express his thoughts!

As I was taking them to where they had to board the boat, Mr. G. who had so long been silently watching everything in the Ashram, asked: 'How long has Swamiji been here?'

'A little over twenty-five years.' This Society has been functioning here for the past twenty-five years?'

'No, no. The Society was started by Swamiji in 1936. In 1923 Swamiji came straight from Malaya to Swarg Ashram on the other

side of the Ganges where he performed intense Tapasya. He entered Rishikesh with what clothes there were on his person-and they were all that he owned. What you see here today is what has grown around him during the course of the last ten years.'

This greatly surprised the party: 'Such growth within so short a time. What was all this before?'

'A mere jungle.'

13th DECEMBER, 1949

RUINOUS EXISTENCE

Sri R. has come to the Ashram. He took Brahmacharya Diksha from Siva some years ago. He was intelligent. He had a great opinion about his own intellectual merits. He pored over books and gained a lot of theoretical knowledge of Vedanta, etc. Ashram-life held no more charm for him. He took to the life of a wandering monk. He liked it. Today he has come back.

You like the wandering, care-free life, I think?' asked Siva.

'No, Swamiji. Now I have determined to stick to your lotus feet and serve you with all my heart.'

'Aha! It took you such a long time to realise the futility of this nomadic life? Sannyasa is not an order of life which should be embraced for the sake of Namaskars or garlands or for good food. Sannyasa is for those who are made of sterner stuff. Continuous peeling of the outer coverings is necessary that is renunciation. Till you get Atma-Jnana, this process of renunciation should continue.

Your preaching will have no value until you acquire that inner purity born of renunciation. Renunciation alone will give you the strength to preach and power to your words. Without renunciation, you become a slave to the householders. Even the respectability which your outward appearance indicative of your Ashram in life gradually fades away.

'Constant mixing with householders for winning their respect and admiration, a desire to preach to others without caring for the reformation of your own self, and an innate craving for comforts and a little pleasure, have robbed you of the very yearning for liberation, have incapacitated you for Sadhana. You have lost during these few years of wandering life all that you might have gained during many lives of intense Sadhana.

'It is essential for a Sadhaka to remain for a period in seclusion and practise intense Sadhana. Work is necessary. You should serve humanity. Seclusion and Seva are possible only if you remain at an ideal place for a considerable time. A rolling stone gathers no moss. I have created the best field for you. Here you can practise both seclusion and Seva also. From this Ashram, you can serve the whole world. And, yet you will ever remain alone, untainted by worldliness.

I am glad, you have at least now recognised the mistake of leaving this place and leading a wandering life. Hereafter, do not even think of such a life. Stick to this place. You have ample opportunities of effecting a rapid evolution here.'

14th DECEMBER, 1949

DR. BAL KISHEN

'Swamiji, I have been wanting to have your Darshan for a considerable time now. Sometime back, I came to the house of the retired Judge living across the Ganga: and, though he himself was wanting to take me here, I had no time then to come to this Ashram. Now God has given me the opportunity.'

And, the visitor introduced himself as Dr. Bal Kishen, District Health Officer of Tehri-Garhwal.

'As your dispensary is run by a charitable institution and is also doing wonderful work among the village-folk, it will be possible to persuade the Government to grant an annual subsidy,' said the D.H.O.

'All great works are accomplished through the willing and whole-hearted cooperation of several people. See, there is the Kumbha Mela. And, on that account, there is Mela here, of several people. The doctor, the Minister, the Municipal Chairman, the Policeman, and the Sannyasi also all these together only can achieve the glorious work,' remarked Siva when Dr. Bal Kishen was about to take leave of him.

Finally, Siva said: 'You have got a period of very intense activity before you. Later, you will have rest. Rest, then intense activity-alternately.'

Rest is a rare thing, Swamiji. Activity and intense activity, alternately,' said the doctor.

Then, come here often. You will return fully re-charged with spiritual energy. You will feel more fit to do more intense work.'

CHIDANANDAJI RETURNS FROM PATNA

The party deputed by Siva to represent him at the inauguration of the Bihar Branch of the Divine Life Society by His Excellency the Governor of Bihar, on the 3rd December, 1949, at Patna, has returned to the Ashram this morning.

You have simply thrilled the entire Patna and the whole of Bihar, too,' greeted Siva as Chidanandaji bowed to him.

Throughout, by Swamiji's grace, there has been a good response and a great eagerness on the part of the people everywhere to learn about the Ashram, the work and the Divine Life Message. The inaugural function at Patna was a great success, Swamiji.'

Vishnuji could not contain himself and interrupted with the remark: 'Chidanandaji's address at the inaugural function was thrilling, Swamiji. His voice was admirably suited to the mike. The whole audience of high officials of the Bihar Government and students of the Bihar National College listened spell-bound to Chidanandaji. As Chidanandaji stood on the platform, he was like Vivekananda standing on the platform of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago.'

Vji continued: We had taken a lot of leaflets and magazines, Swamiji. And, Chidanandaji went on distributing them to everyone he met in the train, on the station platforms, to the railway staff, etc. We met several Engineers on the way, who were returning from the Engineering University inauguration at Roorkee. Someone in the party met with an accident and Chidanandaji served him nicely. This

created a great impression among them. In Patna itself, there were two miraculous experiences. A.K. Sinha's wife was down with fever and the temperature ran up to 102. He was worried if she would be able to attend the inaugural function the next day. Chidanandaji told him: She will be all right tomorrow. And the next morning, the fever had completely left her. At the ladies' meeting, Sri A.K. Sinha's son was thinking of requesting Chidanandaji to deliver a talk on Sthree Dharma. Strangely enough, even before he could express his idea, Chidanandaji began his speech on Sthree Dharma. Sri Sinha's son was surprised and he said: I was going to ask you to speak on this very subject, Swamiji: I do not know how you read my thought. On the train or bus, everywhere we went, Chidanandaji would distribute half the sweets and fruits that we purchased, to the co-passengers. On the platform, he would distribute fruits purchased, to the public, along with magazines and leaflets. He has done great Prachara work during this trip, Swamiii.'

C. was, in the meantime, busy pulling out of the box what he brought with him, several tins of sweetmeats, etc. There were three pots of Sandila Laddus also.

Oh, Sandilya Laddus? Come, bring here. I will distribute them to the office people.'

Someone in the office corrected Siva: 'It is not Sandilya Laddu, Swamiji: it is Sandila Laddu. It is made at a place called Sandila.'

'But, Sandilya suits me. It reminds me of sage Sandilya. Every time I eat these Laddus, I have an opportunity of thinking of sage Sandilya.'

JNANA YAJNA vs PROFIT

The Divine Life' magazine is running on a loss for the past two or three years. There has been a suggestion from one of the Trustees that the Magazine may be suspended for a year or two till the financial position of the Society was a little better.

Siva remarked: 'I cannot think of stopping a magazine, whatever be the loss. Actually, I am thinking of starting a few more Magazines. Because, we had just started the Weekly and therefore, the workers here had to bear this additional burden of work, I have commenced printing my health articles in the form of small pamphlets, though I wanted to start one Health Magazine. Every month I will give one pamphlet on health, and distribute copies of this: it amounts to conducting a health magazine. When we have more workers, we shall start a proper health magazine.

It does not matter if we incur a little loss in the beginning. How much knowledge we give the public! God will give us money when He thinks fit. We have to go on working. If today we are getting ten thousand rupees a month, it is due to the work that we did ten years ago. The effect of the increased volume of work that we have undertaken today will be seen after ten years. Money is pouring forth now. Later on, gold will flow into the Society as from an ocean. I have therefore told Ram Mohan to go on sending sample copies of the Magazine, Weekly, etc., to every address he can lay his hands on.

The Weekly is simply stirring the people today. People do not have the power of sustenance to keep up spiritual thoughts in their mind, amidst the din and bustle of day-to-day city existence: the Weekly

serves them nicely. Every week, it re-awakens them. What a lot of great thoughts it conveys to them! Oh, Vishnu Swami, every day you should send specimen copies to ten or fifteen people.

Go on sending free. Serve, serve and serve. Serve motivelessly. God will reward you in due time.'

15th DECEMBER, 1949

SINCERE REPENTANCE

There was a suggestion that J, an inmate, who has recently left the Ashram, might be requested to join Sri Narayanaswamiji at Calcutta and assist the latter in his work. This was placed before Siva, whose reply was firm and ready.

'No, no. If they have gone away out of hatred, ill-will and anger, let them go. Do not recall them. A wicked man will behave wickedly towards everyone. If you send him to Calcutta, he will quarrel with Narayanaswamiji.

'On the other hand, if he sincerely feels that he was wrong and that he should not have left the Ashram: if he sincerely repents for nurturing ill-feelings towards you all, then I will most readily welcome him back to the Ashram. After all, it is very natural for human beings to err: it is natural for one man to misunderstand another and such misunderstanding will naturally breed some sort of ill-will and fight. But a sincere Sadhaka will reflect later on, repent for his mistake and reform himself. If he does so, then it shows that he has good spiritual Samskaras. If he does not, then it shows that he has none.

'If these two people have gone away, four new people of great ability have already come. Hundreds of graduates, M.A.s and dynamic workers are simply awaiting a call from here. God will provide us with workers. His work will go on.'

16th DECEMBER, 1949

ADVICE TO DOCTORS

Dr. Garg of Mussoorie has come.

It was a miracle. Siva was thinking of going to Dehra Dun to get his eyes examined. We waited for the winter, and for the past one week, he has been seriously thinking of going to Dehra Dun! His health has not been too well and there was some reluctance on our part to let him undertake this tiresome journey to Dehra Dun.

For a very long time, Swamiji, I have been studying your works: and I have chosen you as my Gurudev. It has been my ardent desire to have your Darshan. God has fulfilled it today.'

You are in Mussoorie?'

Yes, Swamiji: I practise in Mussoorie. But, at present, I am undergoing specialised training under one Dr. Rev. Sutherland, of the Mission Hospital, Jagadhri.'

Siva then got his glasses tested by Garg who said that they were simple glasses and need not be changed unless they were positively useless.

'I am very glad to hear that. You have saved me a lot of trouble. I can utilise the time I would have spent on the Dehra Dun trip to more service here itself.'

Siva then revealed the secret of his good eye-sight: 1 am very regular in my Suryanamaskar, recitation of the Twelve Names of Surya and the Dhyana Mantra. I meditate on the rising sun. I do not take salt on Sundays. I am very regular in my Asana-Pranayama practice. Therefore, it is by the grace of Lord Surya I have good eye-sight. With good eye-sight, you can do more Seva to mankind. Eye is the most important organ. Without eyesight, you are as good as dead. Instead of serving others, there should be a dozen people to serve you.'

Dr. Garg described the noble qualities of Dr. Sutherland. Siva said:

'Kindly request Dr. Sutherland on my behalf to visit this place once before he leaves for England. He should stay here at least for a week. There is a small dispensary here which he can make use of for serving the poor people of the locality when he is here.

You should also come here whenever you get the opportunity. Come and stay for a week at least. You will have plenty of opportunity of rendering selfless service to the poor people. The Ashram dispensary is at your disposal. Every time some doctor-aspirant comes here, I take work from them. Dr. Mangalam, Dr. Sundari, Dr. Het Ram, Dr. Lall Dina, Dr. Prahlad-all these people when they come here automatically make the dispensary their own and begin to serve the people.

The medical profession is a noble profession. Through it, you can very easily purify the mind and the heart. God-realisation is a matter of days and hours if you serve the patients sincerely and with Bhava. You should feel thankful to the patients for giving you the opportunity of serving them. The Bhava you can develop if you feel that you are serving the Lord Himself in the patient.

'Never accept fees from the poor people. Serve them with all your heart and soul. Their prayer is a greater reward than even lakhs of rupees. If possible, you will have to give them special diet, milk and fruits, etc., at your own expense. Then you will have rapid self-purification.

I am very happy to hear of the noble qualities of Dr. Sutherland. Indeed, he is a real and practical Karma Yogi. To whichever nation or to whichever religion he might belong, he is a true Hindu, a true Brhmin and an ideal Yogi. The Lord will reveal Himself to such men, very quickly. You should also strive to become like him.'

18th DECEMBER, 1949

THE RAT

After the party of World Pacifists who came to meet Siva had left, there was another group of visitors from Dehra Dun-a Punjabi professor and family. This professor is one of the silent admirers of Siva, one who has, for a long time, been studying his works and following his teachings.

Swamiji, your name has become a bye-word in the whole of Dehra Dun.'

There was a discussion about the publication of books, and the stocking of books, etc.

'Here we have racks and racks of books. There is scarcity of workers and, therefore, there is lack of proper supervision. Rats eat away the books. There is a great loss of good reading matter.'

'Swamiji, please use good rat traps, catch them and leave them far, far away. There is an ointment, Swamiji: it will help you to eliminate the rat-nuisance altogether.'

'Oh yes, someone told me about it. It is a great sin to think of using the ointment. It kills the rats, they say. It is unthinkable. Even its manufacture should be banned. Rats may be a nuisance. But they, too, are God's creation. We have no right to kill them. The Lord lives in them, too.'

Then, Swamiji, you should employ all the various methods of eliminating the rats.'

The Prophet of the Yoga of Synthesis smiled and said: 'So, here, too, you advocate the combined method.'

Yes, Swamiji. You should not use the same trap twice on consecutive days, without washing it thoroughly. Once a rat is caught in a trap, the next day no rat will go near this trap: they know by smell that a rat was caught in it. It should be thoroughly cleaned before being used again. The same kind of edible should not be used on successive days. Various kinds of traps may be used. The same as your Yoga of Synthesis, Swamiji. The result is sure success.'

19th DECEMBER, 1949

A TRUSTEE OF HOLY THOUGHTS

The morning University class came to a close with Sri Swami Krishnanandaji's and Sri Swami Sadanandaji's lectures.

'Sadanandaji, kindly expand the notes you had when you were talking, into a nice article, as soon as you go to your room. Later on, some other work will come and you will forget these ideas.

Few people here are as much students of the University as I am. I have written so many books: yet, even today I feel that I am a student. Therefore, I intently listen to the lectures in the class. If I get one new idea, then I will develop it nicely into a short poem. To this one idea, I will add several of my own-contiguous ideas that throw more light on the subject. Then it will be included in my manuscript. The whole world will be benefited.

'We should be ever prepared to receive new ideas. We should always be a student. Then only will there be improvement within oneself. Some people will be foolishly imagining that they have registered the ideas in their hearts. It may be true that they have an extraordinary power of grasping ideas: they may have very good memory, too. But time will efface all the ideas. If you record the ideas in a note-book, you have preserved them for all time.'

The Tamil poetic biographer of Siva caught his eye at this stage. He says that he has handed the manuscript over to Siva himself, whereas the latter does not have it.

To me the manuscripts are more valuable than anything else in the world. I take great care of the manuscripts. I have got two steel trunks full of manuscripts. Several manuscripts are in preparation.

Some articles are being typed every day, and these I carefully add to the bundles and count the pages every time. Every month I devote one or two days to the sorting out of the articles so that no mistakes occur in the arrangement of manuscripts. All this work, I myself do. I know where each article has been placed. One or two books have been taken up for reprinting. I know that there is some additional matter to be included in the book, though this matter was collected some two years ago. When the book goes to the press, I take out this additional matter and send it.

The holy thoughts will elevate several thousands of aspirants. The thoughts belong to God. We are all His channels, His means of communication. Therefore, they are of great value to me. Tasker Town Branch published a monthly Bulletin containing some extracts from my books and articles. They were all wonderful selections. As soon as about ten bulletins were published, I brought the entire matter together in the form of a small pamphlet. It is now of great use to several Sadhakas.

I have now practically finished my work. Therefore, I am concentrating on printing other people's writings.'

Obviously, that is the secret of encouraging people to write his own biography: and taking a keen interest in getting them published. It hastens the aspirant-author's evolution.

'Sadanandaji, when you talk, you sometimes talk too fast for people to understand. Sometimes, the words are not clear. See, when Chidanandaji speaks, he lays emphasis on every word, even at the cost of speed. This might give some people the impression that he is

a slow speaker: but this is most beneficial to the listeners. Each word will get itself indelibly impressed on the listeners' heart.'

'Yes, Swamiji. I shall certainly follow your advice.'

Siva continued: 'One should not only feel that he is an eternal student, but that he is an eternal Sadhaka also. He should be ever vigilant. He should be humble and simple. However great a care one takes, the thief will silently enter the heart and spoil everything.

Yesterday, it seems, Sri Swami A. came to the kitchen and asked for Bhiksha. Someone there told him 'You will have to get Swamiji's or Chidanandaji's permission.' He came to me and even though I was busy in the office, I attended to him and ensured that he got his Bhiksha.

'Because we wanted to practise some economy in our expenditure, we said that food distribution would be regulated and that the Secretary's permission should be obtained if any extra item of expenditure were to be incurred. This is taken to mean that for every little thing, one has to run to the Secretary or to me. On the other hand, if we are to say 'Be a little lenient', they will feed every passerby or waste foodstuff.

The man in charge of the kitchen should feel that he should co-operate fully with the Secretary. When a situation like yesterday's arises, he should himself take the decision considering himself to be Chidanandaji or myself and placing himself in our position.

'I know that there is some justification for turning the man out: the man in charge of the kitchen will say 'If this man is allowed to take Bhiksha for one day, he will come daily for a month and it will be

difficult to stop him later on.' That is also true. It is very difficult to be in charge of the kitchen.

You must always remember that people who have come here have renounced the world. You cannot expect them to care for anything in the world. They will resent rules and regulations: it is very difficult to bring them under one form of discipline. Temperaments differ: each man's Sadhana is his own. No two men's minds will agree. One rule cannot be applied to all Sadhakas. If you insist on everyone bowing to your rules, then people will go away. We will lose good workers; and we will be spoiling their career also.

'Do not talk of rules and discipline. You have to achieve the same result by some other method. Have a sympathetic heart. Touch everyone's feet with Bhava and humility. Serve, serve and serve. Always request with folded palms. Extract work through love and prostrations. Then you can get a lot of work from all. Then people will instinctively obey you without your imposing any rule on them. You will, at the same time, rapidly purify yourself and hasten the day of your enlightenment.'

20th DECEMBER, 1949

A GREAT WONDER

The morning class went on till 7 a.m. As soon as we got up, Siva noticed Sri Mohindra among those attending.

'Were you here for the Upanishad class?' Siva queried.

'No Swamiji: I came a little later.'

'Oh, what a great loss. People come here from great distances, renouncing the world, to enjoy the Satsang of Sadhue hs and Sannyasins. It is not easy to get a learned Anubhava-Jnani Sannyasin like Swami Krishnanandaji to explain the truths of the Vedanta so lucidly to you. How beautifully and thrillingly he explains the Isavasya Upanishad. Only if you have performed hard Tapasya in hundreds of previous births will you be able to sit at the feet of Jnanis like him and learn the Vedantic truths. Such is the mysterious nature of Maya that even though you have been given by the Lord the greatest opportunity of actually living here, you do not take the fullest advantage of the Satsang.

'Look at me. With all the physical ailments that I have, I get up at 3 a.m., finish my morning work and remain waiting for the bell to ring. As soon as I hear the bell, I rush to the Bhajan Hall. I sometimes get giddy while walking: so, I am carrying a walking stick even though I do not use it. I did not wish to use a walking stick. Now I have merely to carry it, in case I should feel giddy on the way.

You are now hale and hearty: and you remain in bed till 7 in the morning. Such is the nature of the world. Big Zamindars die for a drop of Ganges water in the plains: but people here have no faith in Ganges water. You must daily read Sankaracharya's words: how he has praised a drop of Ganges water. Then only will faith be generated in you.

'Some people have a limited vision and a narrow understanding. They think that a little Havan, a little OM chanting, or reading of Upanishads will give them Brahma Jnana. Others think that worldly

life alone is the best and the renunciation is a cowardly act. They consider that those who have renounced have run away from the world, on account of failures in the world.

'Look at the wisdom that Krishnanandaji possesses. Kings and Presidents will bow at his feet. The world will pay homage to the dust of his feet. You should all take the dust of his feet and wear it on your forehead with great reverence and devotion. At what young age he has renounced the world! What must be the depth of his yearning for knowledge! What must be the intensity of his Vairagya! You cannot even think of renunciation of the world even after so much of worldly enjoyment and experience of worldly miseries. And, you would think that Krishnanandaji renounced the world because he could not thrive in his employment.

'He is a Dheera who renounces the world at an early age. What can the old man renounce? He does not renounce the world: the world renounces him. From birth to rebirth, he lives to tell the same story of ignorance, bondage and misery.

'Krishnanandaji is a jewel. Chidanandaji is a jewel. Vishnudevanandaji is a jewel. Even the Governor of Bihar was thrilled by his Asana demonstrations. The Chief Minister of Bihar and the other Ministers were amazed at his skill. They all wanted to make him remain in Bihar for a month. To hear Chidanandaji speak, thousands waited spell-bound in the College Hall. They were eager to hear him over and over again. People from all over the world will fall at the feet of people like Chidanandaji and Krishnanandaji, to learn the fundamentals of philosophy and Yoga. They are the real emperors.

God has given the opportunity. You must watch every moment. Every morning when you get up, you should reflect I might well have died last night: God has given me yet another day of life here: I should utilise this gift to the best advantage.' The heart must be purified at first. Service alone can do that. But, egoism will prevent you from doing service. This Abhimana will go only by service! When an old woman is walking on the road, carrying a heavy load, does your heart bleed with sympathy for her: will you at once take the load on your own head and follow her? Then be sure that you are ready for the next step in Yoga. When I used to go on propaganda tours, people used to garland me as soon as I got down from the train at various places. But, I used to carry my luggage on my own head. When you go to the market and purchase some vegetables, you require a servant to carry the basket: you are ashamed to carry it yourself.

'Even that will not do. You should not only carry your own luggage, but you should carry the luggage of another man. To carry one's own things is simple enough. There was one Dewan Jaswant Rai in the Ashram a few years ago. He wanted a violin. I got him the violin: and from the Rishikesh Railway Station to the Ashram, I carried the violin myself, for him. When the temple was being built, 1 myself carried baskets of bricks, etc., on my head, identifying myself with the coolies. I was happy that the Lord gave me the opportunity of doing at least that much of service in the construction of His temple.

Can you forget that you are Mr. So-and-so and identify yourself heart and soul, sincerely, with the servants? Ask yourself.

'Due to old age and other bodily ailments, I am not able to do the same amount of service nowadays. But I am daily asking the mind: Are you prepared to carry cow-dung on your head? Are you prepared to identify yourself with the Bhangi and clean the latrines? The mind is even today prepared for such jobs.

Then comes Bhakti. People foolishly imagine that this form is imagination: that form is false: and that the Reality is formless only. There is difference of opinion between people believing in Rama as the son of Dasaratha and people believing in Rama as the all-pervading Atman. People consider Rama the son of Dasaratha, as an ordinary man: Krishna to be an ordinary man. They hardly realise that They are Paramatma Himself. Why should not the Omnipotent Paramatman take whatever form He likes?

'Dayanandaji would never have condemned idol worship. He only wanted to re-establish Vedic religion. Some of his followers misunderstood his teachings and began to condemn idol worship. This Murti here (pointing to the pictures of Rama and Krishna placed in the Bhajan Hall altar) is full of consciousness. Several hundreds of His devotees have incessantly uttered the Maha Mantra for several years, concentrating on this Murti. To Mira, the idol of Lord Krishna was more alive than anyone else. It spoke to her: danced with her: ate butter out of her hands. You are not able to feel that consciousness in the Murti, because you are unevolved. You have come here on account of your Purva Samskaras. Do you sit in the Bhajan Hall for some time every day and sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan? If you do not, you are losing a very great opportunity. You are losing your spiritual Samskaras.

'Maya is very powerful. It will delude man in the twinkling of an eye. One has to be eternally vigilant. Satsang is very necessary. When you are in the company of the wise only, you feel that there is something which is beyond your senses, beyond the mind, beyond the intellect, and beyond your egoism: and that that something alone is the source of bliss. In the dream state, you have no body: in the deep sleep state, even the mind vanishes: and yet you feel that you ARE, that you are ONE, and that you are BLISSFUL. This knowledge is absent when you are asleep: but you know on waking up that 'you' existed during sleep also, and that there was none other, and that you were happy. This one analysis of the deep sleep state will convince you thoroughly that real happiness can be had in the Atman only: and that it is only the wrong identification with the body and the mind that is the cause of misery, pain and bondage.

This idea will remain in your mind so long as you are in the company of wise men. It will vanish as soon as you go away from here. I have told you so many things. You have heard so much about the Atman and the Way of Attainment. But in a few minutes, all this will pass out of your mind and you will begin to identify yourself with the body. Then again, Raga-Dwesha will come: along with them the hosts of pain and miseries.

'Constant study, Constant Vichara, Constant Satsang, that is the secret of digging these ideas into the subconscious mind. Your mind must be saturated with the thoughts of Atma. You must be ever vigilant. The mind will dupe you. Ahamkara is ever waiting to deceive you. You will think that you have achieved the Samadhi Avastha. In a moment of heedlessness, the Ahamkara will assert itself and you will be lost. Because, the enemy is within yourself.

Your lower mind! Vasanas are there hidden in the mind. You do not know when they will attack you and upset your progress. Never mix with worldly people: never listen to worldly talks: never think of worldly things. Then, gradually these Vasanas will die out and your mind will be completely purified. Even if you are sure that you are above evil, you should stick to this place. Even if you have to go outside for work, you should run back to Rishikesh after a very short while. In Rishikesh, you are free from external enemies: you are surrounded by holy thoughts and vibrations. Even if you don't do any Sadhana or meditation, remain here and die here itself-you are sure to take up the thread in the next birth and evolve rapidly. OM Tat Sat. Jaya Ho!'

21st DECEMBER, 1949

WHO CAN STAY GOD'S HANDS?

With Kirtan and Prasad distribution, the 18-h.p. engine was unloaded from the motor lorry and brought inside the Ashram.

27 hours before, no one even dreamt of it. Last evening, an old Punjabi lady (mother of a devotee who wanted to present an engine) met Siva and said: There are three engines with us at Rishikesh. And, my son has asked me to offer one of them to your holiness as our humble gift. Kindly ask one of your chelas to inspect the engines and select the one that will serve your purpose.'

This afternoon, Padmanabhan, Subramaniam and a mechanic inspected the machines, selected one and brought it to the Ashram. What a miracle! Who can stay God's hands? As soon as the machine came, Siva remarked: 'Goddess Lakshmi has come. Let us hail Her

with Kirtan and Prasad distribution. The Lord's Will is supreme. Even if you refuse to accept His gifts, they will come. Such is His All-merciful nature.'

22nd DECEMBER, 1949

NATURE OF VICHARA BUDDHI

After the morning class, Siva came first out of the Bhajan Hall. Suddenly he turned round and stood near the threshold, watching one by one leave the Hall.

Sivanarayanji came out and put on his slippers,

'Oh, they were yours? I was wondering who could have left them here. In future, do not leave the shoes on the way. Somebody might trip over them. Shoes must always be left away from the threshold. In the early morning, while it is still dark, someone might run into the Hall and the slippers might perform a good tooth extraction.

'Even in these little things, one should develop the reflective Buddhi. Before doing a thing, one should think 'What might be the consequences? In what way will it be of service to others? In what way it might harm others? When this Vichara becomes continuous, one is established in righteousness. When the Vichara becomes deep-rooted and natural, one experiences Brahmic Consciousness, too. The little thing leads to the Great Experience.'

THE IDOL OF HEALTH

The percentage of sugar in Siva's urine has been persistently high. Siva has developed a slight but unyielding pain in the right arm. In his child-like simplicity, Siva said: 'It is bearable today.' It is a week

since the pain started, and Siva would not whisper about it to a soul on earth. 'But, if it grows a little more, then the weeping stage will come.' He said and laughed.

Has it been paining for some days past, Swamiji?' enquired Chidanandaji.

Yes, yes: it has been there for a week.'

'We shall get Dr. Bose to examine Swamiji. But it will be helpful if Swamiji will not write too much for a couple of days at least,' said C.

That is death while living. It will be all right. But I have to go on with the writing,' said Siva, who a few moments before thought he could ever reach the 'weeping stage'.

A GREAT FOLLY

A newspaper edited by one of Siva's devoted disciples contains a full-page article, entitled 'Swami....-A Portrait in his own words'. The Swami who has recently been initiated into Sannyasa by Siva has described himself in the course of this article as The greatest of the disciples of Siva'.

As soon as Siva finished reading the article, he remarked 'He has reached the state of a Jivanmukta: now only Loka-samgraha and Videhamukti remain.'

After a brief pause, Siva continued: 'Swami.... has, no doubt, one-pointed devotion to the task he has set before himself. He aspires to go to America and to preach there. He is preparing himself for it. But, it is a wrong aspiration. A Sadhaka should always aspire to

perfect himself. Swami.... hardly realises now what he is in for, and what it means to go to America and wander about there.

The zeal for spreading spiritual knowledge will soon fade away if there is not that inner illumination to sustain that zeal. He will become a prey to comfort and conveniences. He will fall a victim to temptations from all sides. It is a very difficult task to maintain the same spirit of renunciation and Vairagya even for a Jnani: for a baby-soul, it is dangerous to mix with worldly people. Maya is very powerful. Beware!

'D.J.R. was an ardent Sadhaka. He lived here for two or three years. He used to take very simple food, though before coming here, he was taking rich food. He used to wear only a small towel. He used to sleep on the floor or on gunny-bags. He was always practising Sadhana. He was almost sure of rousing the Kundalini in a few months.

'He went to Delhi for a few days' as he wanted to meet someone there. He stayed there for a little while. The Vairagya evaporated. His old love for horse-racing re-conquered him. Just one or twice, he wanted to indulge in it. And, he fell headlong into the pit of worldliness. Twenty years have passed: he is still where Maya had dragged him. Pitiable is the lot of such people. It is all due to heedlessness and wrong aspiration.

'Never advertise yourself. Remain humble and simple. Aspire fervently for Moksha. God's grace will come only if you serve humanity selflessly, and pray to Him incessantly.'

23rd DECEMBER, 1949

YOGA VEDANTA FOREST UNIVERSITY

NOTE: The name University was later changed to Academy.

'We should develop this Forest University nicely by concentrating all our attention on it,' said Siva as soon as he entered the office this morning.

The University has a great future. It is the mother of Indian culture. Indian culture was born in such universities or what they called in those days, Ashrams or Gurukulas.

'Even the work we are doing at the present time is not enough. We have only begun the work. The Weekly is doing wonderful work: it will inspire many students all over the world. All our spiritual guidance correspondence should also go on the University letter-head.

The hours of the university classes are a little inconvenient for worldly people. Sannyasin-Sadhakas who have made it their sole end and aim to aspire for God-realisation would love to attend classes in Brahmamuhurtha: for, that is the most favourable hour for filling the mind with spiritual ideas.

For the sake of the visitors and lay-men-Sadhakas, we should hold regular university classes in the morning between 9 and 11 and in the evening between 3 and 5. Continuous classes should be conducted so that visitors who come to the Ashram in the morning and evening and who do not, in the first instance, have the opportunity to stay on in the early morning the next day, too, can attend the university lectures.

The seed has been sown. The Lord will look to its success. We should also, in course of time, construct big school buildings: and professors' quarters with a good library for each professor, and other conveniences. More and more professors will come. The message of Sannyasa will spread. The glory of divine life will spread far and wide. Ministers and Governors will come and get initiated into Sannyasa. To them, too, the message should go that they are simply wasting their life uselessly in worldly pursuits. The world is false: Brahman alone is real. It is useless to reform the world: the only duty of man is to realise his own Self. Only this can solve the problem of life and death.

'If the Ministers will not come, then we should compel them to come and attend the university classes. We should do Satyagraha before their houses and offices and tell them: You are revelling in ignorance, like a worm rolling in filth. All your cars and bungalows, the servants and titles will fade away into nothing when the last moment comes: come, wake up now. Waste not a second more in this illusory game. Follow me to Ananda Kutir. I will teach you Brahma Vidya. You will become the King of kings.' They will all come. These people have not yet realised the futility of their positions and social status. They have yet to realise that their duty lies in other directions.

'Students from all over the world will come. There should be a big hostel to house foreign students. There should be dozens of Sadanandajis to deliver lectures to these students.'

At this stage, Swami Sadanandaji interrupted Siva and pointed out 'Mounanandaji is still hiding himself, Swamiji. We have much to

receive from him. He should also be made to attend the class and give us the knowledge that he is keeping within himself.'

'From Mouna comes dynamism: from silence comes activism. In due time, you will get thundering orators and Self-realised instructors. The whole world will be represented at the university. It is absurd for people to wander about in foreign lands delivering lectures to audiences who will not be interested in spirituality. True Sadhakas will come from America and Europe. It is all His work.'

The wall clock in the office attracted Siva's attention.

'What is the correct time now? The time-piece in my Kutir shows one time: here this wall clock shows another: perhaps the Bhajan Hall clock shows something different from these two.

It is a wonderful world we live in. There are any number of 'times' in the world, indeed as many as there are nations, perhaps. Greenwich time, Indian Standard time, Bengal time, Daylight Saving time, American time, Negro time, White-man time!

How absurd all this appears to a Viveki! These are all times created by you. Man made the clock: but the clock controls him. He is a slave to it. Your real nature is Satchidananda, beyond time, space and causation. You created Time in a playful mood. Sun, moon, stars, and the universe which indicate the time, were all mental creations. And, yet man is a slave to them.

'As is the nature of phenomenal things, no two clocks agree. No two men have the same opinion. No two faces are exactly alike. Wonderful is creation. What a great intelligence must that Consciousness be which created all this diversity!

'When these clocks disagree, man is bewildered. A child is born: the father looks at his watch and records the time. He later finds that his neighbour's watch differs from his by five minutes. Which is the correct time? He is bewildered. He is worried about the son's horoscope.

'Men's minds also do not agree. Therefore, it is dangerous to allow oneself to be examined by a council of doctors.. One doctor will say it is bronchitis, another will diagnose it as tuberculosis, a third will disagree with both. In the meantime, the patient may die. When doctors, differ, patient dies.

'Have faith. Stick to one path, one Guru, one Ishtam. Do Vichara. Realise your essential nature. Thou art That.'

AVERAGE ECONOMY

A strong smell of atta being fried in ghee invaded the office. Today there is Bhandara?' queried Siva.

'Yes, Swamiji. Lakshmi Havan on behalf of Pannalalji is being conducted today. There is a Bhandara also.'

'Very good. We are saying 'no money and no money' and Bhandaras go on unhampered. This is also one method of economy. One day take uppuma-coffee: another day take cold rice: fast on the third day. Now on an average, you have practised economy.'

REAL VAIRAGYA

Chamanlalji has sent 47 woolen blankets. They are all very costly stuff: a modest estimate would give each one a price of Rs. 25 at least.

Siva said: 'You should take a blanket. Even if you have two blankets already, you should have one of these too. Do not be shy. I have already told Chidanandaji to give you one.

'Real renunciation consists in practising actual possessionless state as long as it is necessary for the mind to adjust itself to all conditions. Vairagya should not be mistaken for torturing the body. Formerly, I used to give away all new blankets presented to me by devotees: I would myself sleep on the floor and use only gunny. Now I have a number of blankets in my Kutir. I have to use one for the head, one for the legs, and so on. But I am collecting them only to give away. Every time I ask myself 'Will you part with these?' and there is the reply from within Yes, any moment these may be given away'. When you need a thing, use it: but have the Bhava that it is the Lord within who uses it. Nimitta Bhava. Constantly rouse up within you this Nimitta Bhava. Then you will be affected by nothing. You will be able to renounce everything in the twinkling of an eye.'

29th DECEMBER, 1949

C.I.D. OF THE MIND

A CID officer has come, seeking information about Dasarath, a Marathi boy who has been in the Ashram for a few days now.

Siva said: 'Dasarath was a hard-working young man. He was ever busy. But he was of the Chanchala type. He wanted to go to Banaras. I gave him some money to enable him to stay at Banaras for some time and come back. He came back and said he would

remain here for ever. Then, another inmate started on a Parivrajaka life. Dasarath followed him also.'

The officer thanked Siva for the information and said: 'I am really grateful to you, Swamiji. This case has done me a good service: for, it has enabled me to have your Darshan. I have, for a long time, been longing to come and see you. I have been reading your books: and I am your disciple, though I had not seen you till now.'

'Become the CID officer of your own mind,' said Siva. 'Introspect. Analyse yourself. Examine yourself. Meditate. Be free.'

30th DECEMBER, 1949

NIRGUNA MEDITATION

Siva brought with him to the office, in the morning, a poem composed by him:

SATCHIDANANDA

Sat Chit Ananda

Existence Knowledge Bliss

Truth Consciousness Bliss

Asti Bhati Priya

Life Light Love

Immortality Wisdom Happiness

All mean the same.

Love melts into bliss.

Siva read out the poem to us all. This will be very useful for writers on philosophical subjects, Swamiji.'

'It is ideal for meditation purposes, Swamiji.'

Siva agreed: That is Nirguna meditation. Think of Satchidananda. Think of Atman or Brahman. Then think of the equivalents of the attributes which nearly denote the nature of Brahman. Parallel attributes will suggest themselves to your mind. Then go on thinking of them. This is Nirguna meditation. You will have to go on thinking, and thinking. Suddenly It will flash within you.' (This last sentence was said by Siva and I have recorded it. But something that he said without words at that moment, it is impossible to record. It was a thrill to watch him say 'Suddenly It will flash within you.' The way he said it made us forget ourselves for a moment. There were the clearest indications when he said it of the unmistakable fact that he had himself experienced that 'flash' and was certain of it.)

'You should go on practising it. Do not expect the eye of intuition to be opened up in a few days. You have for thousands of lives been thinking 'I am this body': and it will take a long time to get yourself established in the realisation that you are the Atman.'

SADHUS ALL

The All World Sadhus Federation meeting concluded. The minutes book was passed round to the delegates attending the Sadhana Week. One Grihastha member felt that he could not sign it, as he was not a Sadhu.

'Who said you are not a Sadhu?' said Siva. You are all potential Sadhus. Deep within you all there is the Sadhu-element. That is why

you are devoted to God and to divine life: that is why you are engaged in Sadhana. In a moment, you may become an external and internal Sadhu. You can certainly sign the register.'

31st DECEMBER, 1949

TYPHOID THIRD WEEK DEVOTIONS

Today is the sixth anniversary of the Viswanath Mandir Pratishtapana. But, today happened to be Ekadashi also. The Puja had not commenced till about 10 am and Siva had come to the temple.

The temple is dull this time. Last year, there were flags and festoons: all over the place there were flowers: and there were a number of banana-poles. This year I see only four banana-poles and they have not yet been fixed.' Siva added This is typhoid third week devotion!'

A visitor looked enquiringly at Siva.

Till the third week, the temperature of the typhoid patient will go on increasing. But during the third week, it will begin to decline gradually. Typhoid third week devotion is devotion that is intense in the beginning and wanes away a little later!'

UNIQUE THEATRE

And, the Nataka Sabha staged the drama 'Harischandra' under the able direction of Rampremi. R. acted excellently and had trained others also very well, many people in the audience were shedding profuse tears during the whole show.

Siva gave a short introduction: Truth is God. Truth is Brahman. One who wishes to realise Brahman or God, must follow the path of truth, the path of Dharma. A man given to falsehood can never realise God. Our youngsters will now stage before you the life of one who never swerved from truth and realised God through the rigorous practice of truth. Kindly see the drama in perfect silence and attentively.'

It was not a drama as dramas are. The moment the curtain dropped and till it rose again, there would be Sankirtan. Everyone repeated His names. On one such occasion, Siva asked Sri Suryanarayan to recite the Isavasya Upanishad. On another, two Ashramites enacted a dialogue from First Lessons in Vedanta'. On yet another occasion, Sri Kamla, daughter of Sri Vishnu Dutta Sastri, and Gargi, her sister, delivered beautiful lectures and sang Bhajans. At about 10.30 at night, Siva got on to the platform and did Kirtan with harmonium. Then he repeated the soothing and awakening Dhwanis which stirred the audience. As he stood on the platform and roared the Garjan Dhawanis, no one could hardly feel that Siva was fasting without taking even a drop of water the whole day.

Later Siva explained: 'Whatever be the state of my health, and the state of my body, I cannot repress the desire to make people repeat the Rama Nama. I must stand up on the platform, whatever be the time, to give the names of the Lord. I have also got the dramatic instinct: and I must give something of that also to the people.

'In the Gita, the Lord says: 'Nigrahah Kim Karishyati'-what can restraint do? A man's nature asserts itself repeatedly. My nature is to give the Rama Nama to people, at every opportunity. Even in the

last moment of my life, I must give the Rama Nama. I must cheer up people. I must make one man do Bhajan and Kirtan. I cannot restrain this. I cannot bother if I have enough physical strength to stand up and do Kirtan or not.'

The Drama concluded at about 11.45 p.m. Shortly afterwards, the Bhajan Hall clock struck midnight. Siva roared OM: everyone turned to him. He then repeated the Peace Chants: 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah....' and added: 'It is now midnight. A New Year is born. May Lord bless you all with health, peace, happiness, and prosperity during the New Year. May you all shine as Jivanmuktas, dynamic Yogis even while living, in this very year!'

JANUARY, 1950

8th JANUARY, 1950

LONG LIVE SIVANANDA

The night Satsang was in progress. It was fairly dark inside the Bhajan Hall as, during the Kirtan, even the lantern which is used for reading of Gita, etc., is reduced and put aside. The two Deepas that stood on either side of the Akhanda Maha Mantra Kirtan altar shone as brightly as they could, but were able to illumine only a third of the Hall, leaving the entrance to the Hall dark.

Through this dark entrance entered a dark force. Who could even think of dark force in the presence of Light?

Govindan approached Siva, axe in hand. He did not have to take much trouble to approach Siva who was sitting just next to the entrance. Does not Siva, the resplendent spiritual star, stand right at the entrance where the Sadhaka leaves behind darkness and approaches the divine light? This ocean of compassion does not mind the dangers that such a stand subjects him to: but insists on standing at this entrance, lest they who try to approach the light, should glide back into darkness.

The axe was raised: the Devas shuddered in the heaven: Vayu was restless and was whistling past outside the Bhajan Hall, crying OM. And, the axe fell. Indra, the presiding deity of Govindan's hand trembled the axe missed its mark. The door which received the blow (blessed art thou, O inert wooden door!) cried aloud its warning.

Govindan became more nervous. He raised the axe again. This time a picture on the wall stood in front and received the blow. Has not Siva identified himself with the Infinite All-pervading Essence of Existence? Yes-the picture said, and offered its head in the place of Siva's.

The two blows missed their mark: only the wooden handle of the axe struck Siva's head. Generally, as soon as Siva enters the Hall, he would remove the cloth turban he wears when he leaves his Kutir (during the winter months). But, today, he forgot. Forgot, yes, because the turban-cloth would not leave the sacred head. So, the axe-handle could strike only the cloth-padding on Siva's head.

Siva woke up' to the fact that someone was trying to assault him. He thought that it was a stick with which he was being beaten. He raised the hand and said: 'Have you finished the job? Do you want to beat me more?' The raised hand received the axe, and the axe made a mark on the skin. It was not more than a scratch. Perhaps, the axe took the opportunity of kissing the saint's hand.

Vishnuswamiji who was sitting near Siva got up in one leap (he is an adept in Hatha Yoga) and hugged Govindan so tightly that the latter could not lift his hand again. V. drew Govindan out of the Hall. The crowd in the Bhajan Hall immediately realised what had happened: one or two people helped Govindan's hand and feet to be tied. And, Govindan was being removed.

As is natural in the case of gatherings, one or two people fell on the assailant and started beating him. Padmanabhan, who was in the Yajnashala room, heard Siva shout at the top of his voice: which drowned the crowd's noise: 'Ohji, don't beat him, don't beat him.' P.

did not know what had happened. When he saw Govindan lying down and a few people beating him and that Siva was shouting 'Don't beat him', P. rescued Govindan and the latter was taken to a room nearby and locked in.

'Continue the Kirtan,' said Siva, and the Kirtan, Arati, and Shanti Patha were duly conducted and the Satsang came to a close.

Saswatswamiji came running to the Office Hall in the meantime and informed us of what had happened in broken words. We ran to the police station, got a couple of constables to follow us and ran up to the Bhajan Hall. As we approached the Yajnashala panting for breath, I heard

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah

Sarve Santu Niramayah

Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu

Maa Kaschit Duhkhabhaag Bhavet

I heaved a sigh of relief. I was sure that Siva was all right. Otherwise, no one could have had the nerve to repeat this Shanti Mantra, in such a situation. No one else can have his head on his shoulders in such a situation: no one else can have the tranquillity of mind to be able to repeat this Shanti Mantra in the midst of the chaos that would have prevailed in the Bhajan Hall. It needs a sage of Eternal Peace to brush aside such a tragic event and to repeat calmly, as usual, as though nothing had happened, the usual Shanti Mantras.

I ran to the Bhajan Hall. I saw Gurudev. The mist that covered my heart began to disappear. 'Ah, after all, he is all right' was the only thought. The utter gloom disappeared giving place to a curious mixture of light and gloom. That Siva could have escaped practically unhurt caused joy: that there could be someone in the world breathing as man who could even think of doing such a thing as Govindan had done, caused the gloom.

Siva has the protection of the Lord. Surely. Today's incidents have conclusively proved that. Govindan was lying in wait for Siva in the morning: he knew that Siva generally came alone all the way from his Kutir to the Bhajan Hall, for the university class. Siva would then be entirely undefended. It would be an easy job for the assailant. But.... Siva did not come. He had never missed the class. We were all surprised that he did not come. I was a little worried if Siva was all right in health. Siva did not come: he was all right. Govindan made a couple of circumambulations of the Bhajan Hall, impatiently waiting for Siva. G. never used to stir out of his room before 9 a.m. when he would stir in bed. For one day in his life he attended the morning Satsang and did Kirtan also in the early morning hours: though it was the devil that gave him this opportunity.

At night, too, Siva would have removed the turban: but Siva himself is not able to say why he did not remove the turban just today.

G. had calculated the distance between the door and Siva's head and adjusted the axe aright in the first instance: but forgot to take count of the projection of the Bhajan Hall door. When the first blow missed its mark, he became conscious of this factor: but when he

went nearer his mark he forgot to re-adjust the axe and so missed the mark again.

All these most conclusively prove the protection of Siva by the Lord Himself.

From the Bhajan Hall after the Kirtan, we all went to the room in which G. had been kept. Quickly, the rope that bound his feet together was removed. He stood up guarded on both sides by policemen. The crowd watched. Siva went straight to G.: bowed to him with folded palms. The police Inspector gazed at this scene in great wonderment. 'Govindaswamiji, do you want to deal some more blows? Here I am. Kindly satisfy yourself.' Govindan muttered: 'No, I do not want to beat you any more. I am satisfied.' Everyone's face indicated that these words poured ghee into the fire of wrath that they were somehow managing to extinguish.

'What harm did I do? Why did you get so angry with me?' enquired Siva in a loving manner. For this, there was no reply.

Then we all left the Bhajan Hall and wended our way down the hill towards Siva's Kutir.

'What shall I do, Swamiji? Shall I register a case against this man?' asked the police Inspector.

'No, no. Just send him away from Muni-ki-reti. That is enough,' said Siva. How could one gauge the depth of his divine love? Here is one who came to kill him: and Siva would pardon him at that very moment. No one except Jesus could do this.

And, so Siva went back to his Kutir only to be greeted by an endless stream of visitors (at that hour of the night!) -many of the men and women of the locality were literally in tears (of joy and grief) when they saw Siva: but Siva coolly sat smiling: radiantly.

Aged Achintyanandaji hung on his walking stick and 'ran' to Siva's Kutir to dress the wounds.

9th JANUARY, 1950

SEE NO EVIL

It was decided last night that G. should be provided with two Ashramite-escorts and left on the Grand Trunk Express with a ticket to Salem, his native place.

Siva would not even countenance any suggestion that G. should be booked': 'No. We should not punish him. He only worked out my Prarabdha. Do you mean to say that anything would happen without His Will behind it? No, no. It was the Lord's will. The Lord only prompted G. to do what he did. Are 'Dyutam Chhalayatam Asmi' and Taskaranam Pataye' mere words? Does not the same Omnipresent Lord indwell the robber and the dacoit, the murderer and the burglar? No, no. I will not let the police charge G. We should thank him for working out my Prarabdha so easily.

The Lord has spared my life because there is some more service to be performed through this body. I must go on with that service. That is all that this incident indicates to me.'

Siva went to the police station at about 11 a.m. with fruits, books, clothes, new blanket and Japa Mala. With his own hands, he applied

Kumkum and Bhasma on G.'s forehead. Siva prostrated to G. Vishnu Datta Sastriji and others were aghast at this sight. Siva then gave the books with his autographed blessings.

'May Lord bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity, devotion, wisdom and Kaivalya!'

He initiated G. into the Ashtakshari Mantra, gave him the Japa Mala and the book and gave the following advice.

'Kindly repeat the Lord's name incessantly. Do regular and vigorous Japa. Forget all that happened. Only take care that the mind does not run into the old vicious grooves again, and that you are not impelled to commit the same mistakes over again. Please read good spiritual books. Do not mix with bad characters. The latent spirituality will become patent through Sadhana. Spirituality is latent in you now. If it was not at all there, you would not have come here. I have asked Saswat Swamiji and Purushottamji to accompany you till Agra and provide you with all comforts and conveniences during the journey. From Agra, you will get a ticket for Salem. Kindly write to me as soon as you reach Salem. Please write to me frequently about your welfare and your Sadhana. May God bless you.'

He then repeated OM Namo Narayanaya several times and made G. also repeat the sacred Mantra.

Special dishes, e.g., Rasam etc., were prepared and given to G. before his departure, along with Saswatji.

Siva then sent a note to the police Inspector that he did not want to proceed against G. in any manner and that the police might drop the incident out of their minds.

In the evening, there was a Thanksgiving Service and prayer for the long life of Siva, in the Bhajan Hall. It was arranged by Sri Gauri Prasadji (retired judge) of Swarg Ashram. The gathering chanted the Maha Mantra in chorus: and the Hall was filled with the vibrations of the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra which was chanted aloud by the entire gathering. Siva then distributed Prasad with his own hands.

Sri G. did write as requsted by Siva. On the 19th February 1950, Siva received a Tamil letter from G., which said:

I have reached Salem safely. I am grateful to you Gurudev for what you have done. I pray that any other pitfalls that may beset my path of life may also be removed by your holiness' grace. I am your humble disciple.

When Siva had read the letter, he said to Muruganandaji: 'Please put Govindan's name on the Magazine Free List. Include his address in the Prasad Register also. All free literature should be sent to him. I will send him books also. I will write to him to come again.'

Siva's supreme love had transformed Govindan, the murderer, into a good soul!

MARCH, 1950

6th MARCH, 1950

ARE YOU INSPIRED?

Siva is nowadays writing 'Ananda Gita'. Chinmayanandaji, the literary critic and journalist, was simply struck with amazement at the simplicity with which Siva had encompassed the entire teaching of the voluminous Yoga-Vasishta within a short article of three pages.

There have been very few people who can imitate Swamiji's style. Now that Gandhiji is no more, Swamiji is the only one in the world. To put a wealth of thought in simple sentences composed of words of one syllable is to have the firmest grip of the subject matter dealt with and to reveal the core of the topic without mincing words.' In this sentence, he summed up his criticism of Siva's style.

'I admire your style of writing, and the style of many people here. Many of the words that many of you use are unknown to me. I sometimes simply gaze bewildered at the editorial-English that you all use.' said Siva.

'That is easy enough, Swamiji, if one applies himself to the task of learning the language. But what one cannot get is the simplicity of Swamiji's language. It needs learning of a different sort altogether-learning or knowledge of the Truth. Swamiji, if I may ask, do you feel, when you write, that you are writing or that someone else is writing? For one thing, the volume of your writing daily makes one feel that you are merely taking down what some one else is dictating from within-i.e., inspiration from within yourself? No one can write

these simple direct prose-poems each line precisely composed, each word weighed and placed in the correct place, unless he is inspired.'

'I do not know.'

Sivapremji now came in.

'Sivaprem Swamiji, there is one more chapter with you, I think.'

Yes, Swamiji, I shall type it at night.'

It is all right. You can even give it tomorrow. I just wanted to make sure. It is a treasure to me. And, I cannot write it again. If the manuscript note-book is lost, the matter is lost for ever.'

Here is the answer to Chinmayanandaji's question! If Siva's writings are the effect of intellection, then surely it is possible to express the same ideas once again. The thoughts are within the boundaries of the mind: and mind can remember them and reproduce them, if necessary.

But, Siva says 'I cannot write it again.'

This reminds us of what Sri Krishna said, when Arjuna, after the War, asked Him for a repetition of His Gitopadesa. Sri Krishna said: 'Oh Arjuna, I cannot repeat now what I told you then. Then I was in a high state of Yoga.'

8th MARCH, 1950

A GALA DAY OF CELEBRATIONS

None planned. No one expected: and the entire day proved to be one of continuous celebrations.

Paramanandaji was busy early in the morning at about 4.30 waking up people in the Ashram. At 5 a.m. sharp, everyone assembled on the verandah of the Mandir. Then there was a procession. At the Mela Office, there was special Kirtan, Chidanandaji leading. C. sank into a profound meditation and trance, his face lit up with a special bliss-aura. As we were leaving the Mela Office, Srimathi Karina remarked: 'Do you know what was most beautiful in the Kirtan here? It was Chidanandaji's face. It was radiant. He was all peace and bliss.'

At five, a tom-tom was heard outside the Ashram. People began to crowd round the crier. And, to everybody's surprise, he began to announce: 'In Swami Sivanandaji's Ashram, there has come a Punjabi doctor, eye-specialist. Swami Sivanandaji has arranged that he will give free treatment for all eye diseases, from the 10th March onwards. No fees will be collected. The treatment will be entirely free. All eye-patients might go to Sivananda Ashram between 1 and 3 p.m. from 10th March.'

The truth is this. The Government has opened a dispensary at Muni-ki-reti to serve the Kumbha Mela pilgrims. A doctor was also posted there. This doctor met Siva and told him that he was an eye specialist. At once, Siva commandeered the doctor's services: 'Oh doctor Saheb, this is the best opportunity for you to render some good service to the people of the locality here. You can perform some cataract operations while you are here. If necessary, we can admit ten people at a time in the Ashram, give them food and accommodation and arrange for their cataract operation here itself. Dhrishti Dana is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, I will call this Dhrishti Dana Yajna. You will earn great merit by this Yajna

and will earn God's blessings and Moksha also. I will have the news tom-tommed.'

Led by Siva, we all got into the boat. Kirtan of the Lord's name rent the air and people standing on the roads on both the banks wondered: 'Is this Deva Loka? Is this Lord Siva Himself, with His Sankirtan Party?'

In the Gita Bhavan, we were told that Sri Jayadayalji was not there. Siva said: 'It does not matter. Go to the Satsang Hall. We shall do Kirtan there.

No invitation: no reception: no welcome: no introduction: no request. Siva, with the seventy odd disciples, walked into Hall as if it were his own and conducted Sankirtan.

There was a grand Ganga Puja at the Viswanath Ghat which had been specially illumined for the purpose, and the celebrations came to a happy close.

9th MARCH, 1950

REAL CHARITY

In the evening, a batch of people was going along the road, singing songs to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Siva called them and took them into the Mela Office. After making them sing the Lord's names for some time, he reverently gave them Rs. 5 and some fruits as his love-offerings.

Later in the evening, it was pointed out to Siva that they were beedi vendors.

You mean to suggest that because they were beedi vendors, we should not have given them Rs. 5? No, no. That should not be our attitude. Charity is charity. We should not discriminate in the matter of charity. Does the Sun discriminate and shine only on good people? Does Ganga practise discrimination and give water only to good people? Does a mango tree yield its fruits only to good people? Does air refuse to enter the nostrils of wicked people? Everyone is Lord Narayana Himself. Everyone is your own Atman. Have the Virat Bhavana always. That is the road to Moksha.'

10th MARCH, 1950

PROF. PATHY OF THE LONDON UNIVERSITY

Sri Prem Nath (son of Sri Ram Ratan of Dehra Dun) brought with him Sri Prof. Pathy of the University of London. The Professor was keenly interested in the activities of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University. Siva explained to him the origin and the work of the University.

'How many students are there here, Swamiji?'

'At present, there are only a handful of students, those living here. Three non-inmates are also here to study Yoga and Vedanta. And, the Forest University Weekly, which is the official organ of the University, has a circulation of more than 750.

You wonder perhaps why the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University has so few students? It is because one of the fundamental qualifications for admission into the University is Vairagya or dispassion which alone can inspire a man to seek a knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta. This turning away from the objective enjoyment of the world is very

difficult of attainment, very few can possess it. These few alone are fit to be the students of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University.

'Secular Universities are flooded with applications for admission: thousands of students wish to become B.A.s and M.A.s. All of them want to become I.C.S.-men. This attracts more men, because it provides them with the maximum scope for sensual enjoyment.

There are no degrees in this University. There is no period of study also. One has to study Yoga all his life to attain perfection. There is only one degree that can be awarded in it-Atma-Jnana. It is the greatest of all degrees: M.A., Ph.D., and I.C.S. are nothing when compared to this supreme degree. This degree of Atma-Jnana cannot be conferred on the student by any authority on earth. It has to be earned by oneself: it has to be realised and experienced. It is not a piece of paper or a badge: it is an invisible crown of glory whose effulgence will be felt by those who approach the person wearing it. People will not shudder at his sight, as they do when they see a Minister or high official: they would love to be near him, they would love to talk to him, they would be inspired in his very presence, they would enjoy great peace and happiness in his presence, their problems will be solved at his mere sight, they would feel as though the worldly burden which was so long oppressing them has suddenly been lifted off their shoulders as soon as they approach him.

This Atma-Jnana degree holder does not distinguish himself by travelling in a lovely motor-car or aeroplane, by wearing silk suits, and smoking costly cigarettes or pipe. He is humble, simple and often passes unnoticed-one among the crowd, yet he is distinctly

above the common run of humanity. He is like a child. He is fond of being one with all. He does not want to shine as any superman. Yet, everyone who approaches him feels that this man is no man but God on earth.'

I am grateful to you, Swamiji, for your explanation. You are perfectly true in your comparisons of the secular universities and this unique spiritual university. I shall see that this University gets the recognition that it deserves. Often public help goes to universities that do not deserve it. There is a bogus private university in America that awards Ph.D.s and M.A.s for a few dollars. I am very glad that you have decided against the award of any such degrees for students of this university. I shall be grateful if you can ask the Manager to send me a copy of the Forest University Weekly which I shall study diligently.'

14th MARCH, 1950

AHAMKARA YOGA

'Do you know what Ahamkara Yoga is?' asked Siva when he entered the office.

'No, Swamiji.'

I will tell you. Everyone who wishes to practise the Yoga of Synthesis should have a clear knowledge of this new Yoga also. This Ahamkara Yoga is 'the other side' of the Yoga of Synthesis: one has to be extremely vigilant in order to avoid it. At any moment, a Sadhaka might become a follower of Ahamkara Yoga.

The first type of Ahamkara Yogi is the Swatantrananda. Out of sheer necessity (not because the disciple deserves it), the Guru gives the gerua cloth and initiates the disciple into Brahmacharya. It may be for the purpose of enabling the disciple to get Bhiksha from the Kshetra, or in order to keep his Poorvashrama family away from him. For obvious reasons, the Guru does not initiate him into the holy order of Sannyasa. But the disciple goes away, shaves his head and throws away the sacred thread; thenceforward he shines as a Paramahamsa Sannyasin. He soon meets with his downfall. This is one type of Ahamkara Yoga.

A young man comes to the Ashram. He has good spiritual Samskaras: and has good Bhava for service. In order to encourage him, I give him Sannyasa also. He composes some songs and poems. I wish to develop this faculty in him and so appreciate his poems. He succumbs to pride and imagines that through meditation (without the botheration of service), he will be able to develop his talents more easily and quickly. He wants to go to Uttarkashi for deep meditation. He wants to lead a Parivrajaka life. What is Parivrajaka life? How can one experience the mysterious ways in which the Lord helps and protects the devotee? Only by surrendering oneself completely into the hands of the Lord. But, this boy does not have this faith in the Lord. He is not prepared to surrender himself completely. He keeps fifty rupees in the handbag which he carries with him: and he expects God to reveal His grace, and 'If you do not help, O God, I have got the money with me.' This is another kind of Ahamkara Yoga.

'One Sadhaka wants to practise Kundalini Yoga. This is very difficult and needs expert guidance. The Sadhaka foolishly goes on

practising Pranayama. He thinks, by merely holding his breath, he will be able to awaken the Kundalini. What will happen when the Kundalini is really awakened-he does not know. What the Sadhana is-he does not know. He does not also want to do any service: he does not believe in Nishkamya Karma Yoga: he only feeds his egoism by resorting to the cave-life. He has to have some conveniences and comforts which cave-life does not provide him. He neglects his health: he neglects the real Sadhana. His body falls a prey to disease and decay: his mind is overpowered by egoism. He perishes. This is yet another kind of Ahamkara Yoga.

Here is another Sadhaka who thinks that he is proof against all these pitfalls. He is a Jnana Yogi. He believes the entire world to be a false show. Brahman alone is the truth. He delivers lectures on the Prasthanatraya. He longs to be appreciated by people of this false world. He is unable to control a small evil habit-smoking; but proclaims loudly The world of names and forms is false'. This is another kind of Ahamkara Yoga.

To learn the Prasthanatraya by heart is very easy. To deliver thrilling lectures for days on end on one Sloka of the Gita, one Sutra or one Mantra of the Upanishads, is easy enough. To stop the breath, the pulse-beating or the pulsating of the heart, and to exhibit various other Siddhis is also easy. To shave one's head is very very easy: and to put on the orange robe and roam about as a Paramahamsa Parivrajaka Acharya is very simple. But to put down the Ahamkara or egoism is very difficult. To be humble and simple, to serve everyone with Atma-Bhava or Narayana-Bhava is very, very difficult. Such selfless service alone can enable you to conquer your egoism. The service will have to be done over a proctracted period

of time. Go on serving and praying to the Lord. Curb your egoism. Shave your inner being of Ahamkara. Then you will really shine as a Paramahamsa. Then the Kundalini will awaken Herself automatically and illumine you. Then the wisdom of the Prasthanatraya will dawn in you without any effort.

"That is real Sadhana. That Sadhana which does not aim at the curbing of one's egoism, but which only goes to feed one's egoism, is the very opposite of Sadhana and is no Sadhana at all. One should embrace Sannyasa, one should take to Parivrajak life, one should practise Pranayama and other limbs of Yoga, one should study the Prasthanatraya and meditate also: but all these should invariably be accompanied by an internal Sadhana of egolessness. With this, all other forms of Sadhana become fruitful: without this, they cause greater and greater bondage to Samsara.'

27th MARCH, 1950

THIS IS MY METHOD

Dr. Kailas Nath, the young Punjabi doctor who has been posted to Muni-ki-reti for the Kumbha Mela Government dispensary, was attending on a patient in the Ashram Operation Theatre (Ganga Kutir). Srimathi Karina was assisting him.

After the evening Satsang, Siva entered the Ganga Kutir. 'Om Namo Narayanaya, doctor Saheb. Om Namo Narayanaya, lady doctor!'

'Srimathi Karina is doing intense Sadhana. She keeps herself ever busy. Morning meditation, Asans, Gita study, Hindi study, attending Satsang, and assisting the doctor in the eye clinic. Good.'

He stood there watching the doctor giving an injection to the patient.

The Drishti Dana Centre is a bit dull these days, I think,' began Siva.

'Yes, Swamiji. So far in this Yajna, we have operated upon ten cases of cataract. All of them, thanks to your grace and blessings, have been successful, in spite of the patient's non-co-operation.'

'I have been thinking why more and more people are not coming here daily. Except for the tom-tom and distribution of leaflets, we have not done any intensive campaign to procure patients for the Yajna. What you should do is to go to Rishikesh and stand at a prominent place and deliver a lecture on the importance of keeping the eyes healthy and of preserving the eyesight. You should explain to the people the anatomy of the eyes, and also give them some general hints on the hygiene of the eyes. All people will be benefited and they will get confidence in you also. People will then know that you are earnestly interested in serving them. They will then flock to you.

You must not feel shy. You must boldly assure them: 'Come to me. I will restore your eye-sight. I will give you new vision. I have so far cured ten people of cataract. People who were unable to see a huge elephant standing before them a few days ago, are now able to thread a needle.' You should not feel that this is self-praise. You should even make a few slides describing the state of the patient before your operation and after-how he came to the dispensary, feeling his way with a stick, and how, after a few days, he walks about cheerfully with his eye-sight fully restored. You should show a short reel of movie-film also, depicting yourself conducting the operation. Do not think that you are thereby praising yourself, or

boasting. You need not be afraid of criticism also. Let people criticise you or say that you are boastful and arrogant. But, really suffering people will flock to you; you can do a lot of service. That is what is wanted. You should always seek newer and newer avenues of serving people: you should find out novel methods of serving the public. This is Aggressive Nishkamya Karma Yoga. This is my method.'

Later, Siva took the doctor to his Kutir. The doctor remarked: 'Oh, the room is full of files and files and books all round.' Siva replied: Yes, yes: I will show you. That steel almirah is full of unpublished manuscripts. They are my treasure: therefore, I keep them in a fire-proof cabinet. This is my Durbar.' So saying, Siva sat down on his seat opposite his writing desk. This Gaddi (a rolled bed used as a backrest by Seths generally) was given to me by someone several years ago. I did not use it: I thought it was an old man's luxury. It has been lying in the Kutir for a number of years. Just recently I thought that it might as well lie behind my back here and so placed it here. These are the books in the making. This is the seventh book of poems. This is a book which I am writing on Naturopathy. This is Ananda Gita. Those are the life-books. This is the spiritual lessons bundle. 'My Magazine' of Madras is publishing these spiritual lessons since the last twenty years. That bundle is correspondence with spiritual aspirants and contains their letters to me and my replies. I go through my replies once again and take out useful paragraphs of general interest and convert them into spiritual lessons. The letter inspired one: and the book 'Spiritual Lessons' will inspire thousands.

I keep two dozen note-books ever-ready for writing. Not one thought should be lost. These people, when I give them matter for typing, sometimes delay the return of the note-book. So, I make more and more note-books. I keep some here; I keep some in the office also, so that any moment I will be able to write. I keep several fountain-pens, all filled with ink and ready. I keep one pair of spectacles here, another in the almirah as spare, a third one in the office. No time should be lost in searching for them: work is of paramount importance. I keep several torch-lights-some near the bed, some near this seat, some near the easy-chair on which I take rest. Even at the dead of night, if a good thought comes, it must at once be recorded.'

Then, like a child he showed the doctor three watches that were in the Kutir. 'One will be here, another in the bed-room. They enable me to be punctual in my work. Work is of supreme importance. That is my method of work.'

'Swamiji, you are doing so much of work every day. You are writing on so many subjects. I simply do not know how it is possible for you. How do you get all these thoughts, always inspiring and a perennial flow of them! We may be able to get a flash of good thoughts occasionally: we may be able to get a gush of several thoughts for a few days perhaps. But the gush of random thoughts won't all be inspiring; and inspiring thoughts won't gush forth like Ganga. But you seem to have acquired both. What is the secret, Swamiji?'

I do not know!'

'Everything here seems to be unique, Swamiji. There is a lot to learn from you. I wish I could sit always at your feet and learn your unique methods of service.'

Yes. Yes. And, what do you think of the people here? They are all unique in their own way. Some are poets, some are doctors, some are orators, some are Jnanis, some are great thinkers. Look at Purushottam! He is a unique cook: and he is a unique binder, too. Look at this binding. The book is bound with a tin-cover. It has been made water-proof and fire-proof also. And, Dr. Krishnadas is a doctor and a poet also.'

Yes, Swamiji. K. will, in course of time, make a very good doctor. He has got the aptitude; and he is eager to learn. And, Swami Chidanandaji, too.'

Oh, Chidanandaji? He is a genius. You have not read his writings? I will give you his book 'Light Fountain'. It is highly inspiring. He is an inspiring orator. He recently addressed the Bihar Provincial Branch inauguration, presided over by the Governor of Bihar. People were thrilled. He has a pure heart full of universal love. That gives him the magic touch; he can cure a person by mere touch. People always go to him for treatment, even when there is a highly qualified doctor here. He knows the scorpion Mantra, too. It works like magic for him. The minute. He repeats the poison comes down in a Mantra-any Mantra-once and he attains Siddhi in it. He is a saint. He should have been a great Yogi in his previous birth also. It is very difficult to find a person like him nowadays. He is a rare genius.'

'Have you seen the Kaivalya Guha?'

'Yes, Swamiji. That is another unique feature here. Do you go there daily?'

Previously, I used to go in the afternoon. Nowadays, I do not. Work has increased so much. I now feel that everything is Guha.' (He pointed to his chest, almost involuntarily, indicating that the heart is the real Kaivalya Guha.) I go from here to the office: and then come back here. Service is of paramount importance. That is my method of work.'

Then Siva showed the doctor the easy-chair on which he takes rest occasionally. This is another unique thing here. You can't get the like of it even for a hundred rupees now. It was purchased long long ago. When you lie down on it, you feel as though you are in bed.' So saying, Siva actually got into the chair. 'If it is cold, then I pull this razai on.' As he said this, he enacted it also just as a child taking the greatest delight in showing its toys.

'People think that a Sannyasin should not have this or use that,' said Siva tapping a call-bell playfully. 'But I have no such notion. Service is the thing. Work, work and work for the welfare of humanity. Keep the instruments-the body and the mind-in a fit and healthy condition for the work. I am a different Sannyasin. I like to serve. People imagine that a Sannyasin should always be grave and should always sit like this (he closed his eyes and sat erect) and thus give the impression to people that he is a Jivanmukta. But I am of a different type. Work should be your meditation. That is my method.'

The doctor had finished his milk. Siva suddenly said: 'Your mother will be waiting for you. Om Namo Narayanaya,' and bowed.

I have learnt a lot today, Swamiji. I had read your book 'Siva Gita', your autobiography. At first, when I opened the book and read a couple of pages, I felt strange thoughts creeping into my mind. I felt 'What is this? All....'

'Self-glorification?' prompted Siva.

The doctor burst into laughter. Yes, Swamiji. That was what I thought at first. But, as I read it a second time, a thought flashed upon me. You have revealed the secret of your life through that book: and, what is more, you have provided the reader with a pattern of Perfect Life. You want that people should live such a life as you have portrayed in the book.'

Aim at serving the people. Do not bother if the people criticise you. That is my method.'

28th MARCH, 1950

RAMANAVAMI SADHANA

The Ramanavami Sadhana commenced on the 21st March. The Ashramites had been asked to do some Malas of 'Om Sri Ramaya Namah' (Rama Shadakshara) Japa and take part in the Ramayana-Navha Parayanam.

Siva added to this the daily 'enactment' of one Kandam from his 'Ramayana Drama.'

'Sadhana on such special occasions should be intense, even though it is for a short period. These nine days, everyone should be Rama-mayam. Rama Nama Japa, reading of the Ramayana (both the Tulasidas Ramayana and the Valmiki Ramayana), and at night

Ramayana Drama also. Thus will the Sadhana, even during these nine days, be an intense one. Everyone will be filled with the glory of Rama. Whatever you do, you should have intense application to it. That is the secret of success. If you serve, serve intensely, with all your heart and soul. If you worship the Lord, give your heart and soul to Him. If you meditate, meditate intensely. That is the secret of rapid progress in the spiritual path.'

This morning, as soon as Siva entered the office, he greeted us Jaya Ram ji ki'. Thus began the Ramanavami day. We had morning meditation class and a prabhat pheri also with 'Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram' Kirtan.

This morning's office-Kirtan was also full of Rama. During the entire week on every occasion, Siva has been reciting the Sloka

Sri Rama Rama Rameti Rame Rame Manorame

Sahasranama Tat Tulyam Rama Nama Varanane

In the temple, the Havan of Rama Mantra is going on. Alongside sit Siva and the devotees while Sri Purnabodhji and Swami Krishnanandaji and Sri Ramprem give readings from Stotra Ratnakara, Tulasidas Ramayana and Valmiki Ramayana. Siva's gramophone records of 'Sangeeta Ramayana' were played. Sri Rao Saheb N.G. Venkatesa Iyer of Salem recited Siva's 'Hanuman Chaleesa'.

WHERE IS EVIL?

After Kirtan, Siva delivered the following discourse:

'Rama is Para Brahman. Sita is Maya. Rama minus Sita is Para Brahman alone. Worship of Rama is adoration of Brahman. Through Rama's worship, one can easily attain knowledge of Brahman. Sita is the illusory power of the Lord Himself that veils the Jiva's realisation of the real Swaroopa of Rama. The why of this illusory power you cannot know.

'How did Karma arise? How did evil come about? What is the origin of phenomena? From the Satchidananda Para Brahman, how did Asat Jada Duhkha come? If Rama is Satchidananda Para Brahman and He and He alone pervades all, why do we find evil and misery in this world? These questions are transcendental. They are Atiprasnas. The finite intellect cannot understand the mystery, which is beyond the speech and the mind. Intellect can grasp only things relating to the senses and the mind. One cannot get a solution to this eternal question except through the realisation of the Satchidananda Para Brahman Rama.

'In reality, evil does not exist. There is no evil except in your imagination. All is that Satchidananda Para Brahman Rama.

The existence of evil is due to your wrong perception. It is only in the Vyavaharic sense that there is evil. And that evil exists to glorify the good. This evil has co-existed with good in all periods of time. In Satya Yuga, the percentage of evil might have been less. In Kali Yuga, the percentage may be more. But there has always been evil in the world. There is, besides this external evil, the ceaseless fight between the Subha Vasanas and the Asubha Vasanas within man.

'Similarly, in the world also, there are Daivic societies and Asuric societies. The Daivic forces always work for the welfare of

humanity and for the final emancipation of man from the bondage of Samsara. They work for the establishment of real communism in the world.

'Real communism is Vedanta which preaches oneness and equality. Real communism is divine life which ennobles every man and prompts him to see his own Self in every living creature. Real communism is divine life which demands of everyone to share what he has with others, to work for the welfare of all. It is not this Asuric communism which destroys temples and burns the devotees of the Lord.

There is another Asuric movement in the South. It is the self-respect movement. Real self-respect is also good. That is divine life which respects all as one's own Self. It strives to take man towards God through worship of His Form and repetition of His Name. But, this Asuric self-respect movement pulls down temples and burns Ramayana.

'At the same time, there spring up Daivic institutions which strive to establish Dharma, to bring about real communism and self-respect. These institutions are run by the devotees of God, Sadhakas and Siddhas. They lead the people along the path of divine life. Through conferences and propaganda, they uphold Dharma, devotion to God and knowledge of the Self. The Theosophical Society has been holding regular conferences. There are other institutions conducting Sankirtan Sankirtan Conferences and spiritual conferences. The Divine Life Society has also been conducting such conferences. The first Conference was held at Villupuram by Dr. Mani. Three conferences were conducted by the pious and noble Venkataramiah

(Swami Ramananda). The great work was given new life to by Dr. Mangalam and Sri S.V. Iyer of Tambaram. The thread was taken up and the work is carried on by others. Sri Rao Saheb N.G. Venkatesa Iyer conducted the Second Divine Life Conference last year at Salem.

Rao Saheb V. is a noble pious soul who is striving his level best to spread the glory of the Lord's name. He is a dynamic selfless worker with a noble and magnanimous heart. The Conference was a great success. Sri V. went from lane to lane, from house to house and stirred the people to tread the path of divine life and attain the Lord's Sayujya. To such a noble soul I give this little love-offering of mine in the form of an award-M.S.G.S. which means 'Member, Sivananda Gyana Sabha'.

The Sivananda Gyana Sabha is there where people sing Lord's Name. The Sabha is there where man runs to the aid of his sick and ailing brother. The Sabha is there where man meditates on the Almighty. The Sabha is there where Atma-Vichara is done.

'Sri Venkatesa Iyer is a great Karma Yogi. Living in the world, carrying on his worldly duties amidst worldly. distractions and family burdens, he has been boldly working for the spiritual uplift of the world.

It is very easy to retire to a cave. You will pretend to meditate for some time: after six months, Tamas will set in. You will not know where you are. How easy it is not to tell a lie when you have no one to talk to! How easy it is to control your anger when no one approaches you, much less opposes you! What is there in controlling the mind when there are no distractions at all? The real glory of a

real Yogi or Jnani lies in being able to control the mind and to engage himself in Karma Yoga for the good of humanity, while yet living in the world. Even a little of the practice of this Yoga at once purifies you. Sri V. is a Dheera who has been serving humanity and leading the divine life, while yet living in the world. May God bless him! May God bless you all! May you all become Rama-Swaroop!'

30th MARCH, 1950

EKADASHI MAHIMA

It had been decided in the evening that today's Nama Ramayana Parayana and Sahasranama Parayana would be done in the Studio and broadcast' over the loudspeaker. But, Siva himself came up to the Studio (and he has been fasting without taking even a drop of water, today being Ekadashi).

Seth Pannalalji, the mighty pillar of the Sivananda Mission has generously donated a loudspeaker set to the Ashram. It has been installed in the Ashram. The entire atmosphere is stirred with the Kirtan Dhwanis, Bhajans, etc., through this loudspeaker which has been christened by Siva as the 'Anandavani Broadcasting Station'.

Siva began with the Omkara Nada and announced himself:

'Now Swami Sivananda will sing a few Kirtan Dhwanis.

He will do a little service to you through the loudspeaker."

Then, he delivered the following speech in Hindi:

Today is Ekadashi. It is only nine o'clock now. It is good on Ekadashi to keep vigil at night and sing His names. Therefore,

please do not sleep now. Sit up. I will sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan. All of you, who hear me, also sing the Kirtan along with me. You will quickly attain the Lord's grace.

'Ekadashi is a very auspicious day. I do not know how many of you observed fast today. Fasting on Ekadashi is a potent means of eradicating Avidya and of attaining purity of mind and through the purity, the grace of the Lord. You will attain health and longevity also. You will develop a powerful will. If you are too old to fast completely, then take a little fruits and milk. If you have not fasted today, at least fast from the next Ekadashi. I shall be grateful to you.

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

This is a great Mantra which occurs in the Kalisantharana Upanishad. It does not contain any special Bija Aksharas; therefore, it can be repeated at all times without bothering about Suchi or Asuchi. Eating, sleeping, walking, taking food-at all times repeat this Mantra. You will quickly attain Moksha..

'In Kali Yuga, conditions are not very favourable for Sadhakas to practise Hatha Yoga. Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga require very keen intellect. In this Yuga, it is only the Name of the Lord that can take you to the other shore of immortality. Serve all selflessly. Repeat the Lord's name. You will easily attain Moksha.

In the same tune

Sarva Dharman Parityajya Maamekam Sharanam Vraja

Ahum Twaa Sarvapapebhyo MokshayishyamiMaa Shuchah

What have you learnt, tell me frankly.

From the Bihar and Quetta earthquakes?

Death may come at any moment. Are you ready?

Nothing that you have now will follow you, except the Nama-Khajana (treasure of repetition of the Lord's Name). Father, mother, wife, son and friends: bungalows, motor cars and coats: property, titles and name-fame-these will not follow you after death. When your throat is choked, your relatives will only be searching for your iron-safe key and bank pass-book. At that time, when you leave this world, only this Nama-Khajana will prove to be a real friend. So, go on hoarding this Name-wealth.

Then Siva sang various Kirtans.

Now I shall sing one English song that will inspire you very much. I used to sing it during my tours in the Punjab and people would sing and dance, forgetting themselves. Another Kirtan they liked was 'Gopikavallabh Radheshyam'. They would sing so excitedly that they would not know when their pagri (headgear) fell off.

The song I am going to sing is a tonic; it is a panacea for all human ills. It is the Chidananda Song. In a few words, it reminds you that you are the Satchidananda Atma, ever blissful, and full of knowledge. All your sufferings are due to wrong identification of the Self with this perishable inert body. You have forgotten your real nature and, therefore, imagine you are suffering. Now, wake up and sing-

Chidananda Chidananda Chidananda Hum

Har-halme Almastha Satchidananda Hum

You may be poverty-stricken: it may be days since you have had a morsel of bread. You might have lost all your property in Pakistan. Your body may be assailed by various diseases. But the moment you sing this song with Bhava, new thrill of joy will fill your entire being. You will feel that you are the Amara Atma. You will be fearless, without anxiety or worry.

The same song I will now sing in English. Nowadays there is a lot of talk about the replacement of English by Hindi. People do not tolerate their brethren speaking the English language. Such an attitude is unfortunate. English also has come out of OM, the mother of all languages. Like Hindi, English also has a rich diction. English has now come to be spoken in all the Western countries. We cannot live completely isolated from the West. There will always be businessmen in India wishing to go overseas: students who will go to Western universities for further advanced studies. They must know English. We must have a broad Vision. India's culture is Vedantic culture. Vedanta is universal religion. Our vision also should be universal, not narrow and bigoted. Develop Hindi by all means. Popularise Hindi by all means. But do not hate English: give it also a place.

Knowledge-Bliss, Knowledge-Bliss Bliss Absolute

In all conditions I am Knowledge-Bliss Absolute

'Do not identify yourself with this little perishable body and suffer. Identify yourself with the Atman and be ever blissful. The nature of the Atman is described in another song:

OM Antaratma

Nitya Suddha Buddha

Nirakara Kutastha

Vyapak Swayam Jyoti Purna Para Brahma

Sakshi Drashta Turiya

Santam Sivam Adwaitam

Amala Vimala Achala

Avang-Mano-Gochara

Anandamaya Chidanandamaya

Anandamaya Chidanandamaya (OM)

'Some people do not like Vedanta. They like only Bhakti. They think Vedanta is opposed to Bhakti. Some others like only Hatha Yoga and think that only through Hatha Yoga, they can awaken the Kundalini. All Yogas are one. They lead to the same goal. A Bhakta may say that he does not want Moksha. But, when in Para Bhakti he becomes one with the Lord, he attains Moksha. A Jnani may not wish to awaken the Kundalini: but in deep meditation, the Kundalini will awaken itself and proceed towards the Sahasrara. Only in the preliminary exercises do these Yogas differ. All culminate in the same Supreme Nirvikalpa Samadhi.'

APRIL, 1950

1st APRIL, 1950

SUCH IS LIFE IN THIS WORLD

Sri G.C. Sharma writes to Siva:

Revered Gurudeva,

I hope your holiness is in receipt of my last letter. I am extremely worried nowadays. Although I know very well that worrying will not help materially in any way, yet I am helpless. My worries are based on the following facts:

I lost my job that was fetching me Rs. 300 per month. My own son, aged 17 years, is missing since 18.2.50. My another son is very badly indisposed. Last but not the least, I had started some business on a small scale in partnership with three gentlemen. One of the partners proved to be of criminal brain, and the whole thing is going to be turned out as nothing.

'Revered Gurudev, you know my heart very well. I have absolutely no place for shelter except your kind self. If one's lot cannot be changed, all that I would request you to favour me is to kindly pray for my peace of mind."

Siva remarked: 'Is not this more or less the experience of everyone at some time or the other in his life? The world is Anitya, Asukha. It is sheer foolishness to search for happiness and peace in the world. We have taken our birth in this world, as human beings, for an entirely different purpose. That purpose is to realise God. Having taken your birth in this world which is Anitya and Asukha, worship

Me', says the Lord. And, that is the way to salvation. Blessed are they that are in a position mentally to renounce the world. They alone enjoy peace and happiness, not others.'

3rd APRIL, 1950

THE DHARMAPURAM MAHASANNIDHANAM AT

ANANDA KUTIR

The scorching sun could not prevent Siva from going up to the temple where His Holiness the Mahasannidhanam of Dharmapuram Adheenam, of South India, had arrived. Siva met the Mahasannidhanam and took him to the studio where H.H. and party witnessed a Yoga Movie film.

Siva did the Panchakshari Kirtan. The ex-Mayor of Madras, Sri S. Ramaswamy Naidu, who was one of the members of the party, delivered the following speech:

'It is a great wonder that Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who was born in the South, has established such a lovely Ashram on the bank of the Ganga in Rishikesh and is spreading through this great institution, knowledge of ancient scriptures. In the Ashram, everything is permeated with the Pranava OM. In the small children who sing the Lord's name beautifully, in the buildings of the Ashram, in the beautiful temple of Lord Viswanath, in Swamiji's talk, in Swamiji's songs, in Swamiii's form, in Swamiji's words-

there is the Pranava reverberant. Why: even in these sweets that we are given here, in the fruits and the coffee, there is that OM.

The Mahasannidhanam has been wishing to come to Rishikesh, and to pay a visit to the Ashram of Sri Swamiji also. By God's grace, this wish has today been fulfilled. I consider it a historical meeting. Never once since the days of the sixty-three Nayanmars has there been a meeting between such great saintly personalities. The previous Mahasannidhanam hardly moved out. Today the Mahasannidhanam has actually met another great Acharya Swami Sivananda.

I do hope in the near future, Sri Swami Sivananda might pay a visit to the Dharmapuram Adheenam in South India. It is the fervent wish of the Mahasannidhanam also. That is what the Mahasannidhanam has asked me to convey to Sri Swamiji.

These days when materialism is fast spreading, it is encouraging to see institutions such as this growing rapidly and spreading the counter-current of divine life. May the Almighty bless the institution with prosperity and progress to enable the sacred lore to spread throughout the world!'

Siva took H.H. to the photographic dark-room. As he was inspecting the various new additions to the studio, Chidanandaji remarked: 'Swamiji would be surprised to know that this place was a jungle, the abode of tigers, twenty years ago.'

The Mahasannidhanam said: 'Saints can work wonders through mere Sankalpa. What can Swamiji not do?'

10th APRIL, 1950

THE BIGGEST MANSION

Sri Nagarmull Murmuria has come from Calcutta, for the Kumbha Mela. He is accompanied by nearly fifty members of his family and friends, too.

'Swamiji, it is a long time since I have had your Darshan. We wish to stay here for a few days. But it appears that there is a great shortage of accommodation here due to Kumbha Mela rush.'

'Occupy any vacant room you like. Accommodate yourself in the heart. You can accommodate the whole world in it. It is the biggest mansion.'

Instruction of very great significance! He who has found his dwelling in the Atman that resides in his own heart does not hanker after mansions and forts. He is ever peaceful and contented. What is more: he finds in that heart accommodation enough for the entire universe, he identifies himself with everything, loves all, serves all, and feels that he is one with all.

HINTS TO SPIRITUAL PROPAGANDIST

During the All-World Sadhus Federation session this morning, Siva had asked Srimathi Karina to speak: and she delivered a beautiful lecture based on her experiences in Europe.

Afterwards, she was talking to Siva about delivering lectures on spiritual topics.

'Swamiji, but it looks to me like carrying coal to Newcastle to deliver lectures on Atma and Jiva in a place like this where my knowledge of these is poorer than that of the audience.'

'You are right. You must be practical in your lectures. Talk always what you have experienced yourself, without revealing that they are your own experiences. Think over the steps through which you have ascended, of the difficulties you have met with and overcome, of the solutions that you have used in dissolving your problems: and string them into a lecture. Everyone will appreciate it, for it will be a unique lecture, highly interesting. Sadhana is an ever-fresh blossom, ever sweet, ever fragrant, ever enchanting.

'Another important point you must bear in mind. Be short in your talks. Just fly past the platform like a lightning-ten or fifteen minutes, half an hour at the most. People should get something like an electric shock: they should be charmed: they should want to hear more. That is the way to keep the listeners' appetite healthy: get up before they feel satiated. Give them time to digest what you have given; and give in small mouthfuls every time.

'Begin with Kirtan. And, end with Kirtan. In the middle also, do some Kirtan. It will keep the audience alive to what you are talking, and bring home to their heart the lessons you wish to instill in them.'

11th APRIL, 1950

GAIT AND CHARACTER

I was sitting in the office. I heard footsteps. It was like the trotting of a horse. I turned to see who it was. It was Swami. ...!' said Siva and continued:

You can study a man's character by his looks, his speech, and his gait also. There is no harm in wearing sandals, or shoes. A good-natured man will see that the soles of his shoes are soft. His gait will

be modest, easy and soft. He will be ever mindful of not disturbing others by his rough gait. Trotting about like a horse betrays lack of manners and lack of culture.

'Especially so in the case of a Sannyasin. A Sanyasin is expected to walk slowly, placing each foot deliberately on the ground, taking care that he does not thereby kill any insects that might be crawling on the ground. He should practise humility. He should walk looking at his toes, always withdrawn into his own Self. But look at this young Swami! He is Rajasic. He cannot control himself. He has no regard for others: he does not care if his walking disturbs others. Such should not be your nature. You must mind these little details. Then only will the major virtues manifest themselves in you.'

AS COAL IN NEWCASTLE: SO IS YOGA IN INDIA

Sri S.N. Mitra, I.C.S., Excise Commissioner of the U.P., has come: he will stay here for a few days supervising the Mela in Rishikesh. arrangements has He been accommodated in the Ashram premises for the period of his stay here.

While light refreshments were being served to him, he was discussing certain matters with Siva. He was very happy that India had saints like Siva to guide her population along sane lines. He felt that it was India's message alone that could save the world from chaos, riots and wars.

'Spirituality is the very salt of the earth in this country,' said Siva. 'World peace can be well and truly established only when India takes over the spiritual leadership of the world.'

Yes, Swamiji. All the other nations are steeped in materialism: and the lead materialism can give can only be towards war.'

'Each country has its own speciality, its own glory. There is something wonderful in every inch of God's creation. No nation is without its own glorious points. As Newcastle is famous for coal, as some other country is famous for iron, so also India is famous for renunciation and Yoga. Renunciation is the key to peace. Soon the world will learn to listen to India's spiritual message.'

HOW TO STUDY GITA

A young aspirant of emotional nature sat at Siva's feet and begged for instructions. Siva said: 'Study Gita regularly. Gita contains all that you need know in regard to Yoga and Sadhana. You cannot understand the real meaning of the Slokas all at once. You will have to sit at the feet of some learned, saintly personality and learn. Do Japa. Do selfless service. Purify your heart. If your mind is pure, then you will instantly understand the meaning. All knowledge is within. When you attain purity, the meaning will instantly flash on your mind.

12th APRIL, 1950

YOUR NAME, A BYE-WORD IN JAFFNA

Two European Sannyasins came into the office. One was a German who fled from an internment camp years ago and taking Siva's guide-book to Kailas-Manasarovar, escaped into the Himalayan interior.

The moment Siva saw him, Siva recalled the past incident.

ob Yes, Swamiji: you are perfectly right. I am now in Jaffna. I have a small Ashram there. This Swami is a French Sadhu and has come out to India recently. He was greatly inspired by your teachings and is now practically your follower.

'And, Swamiji, I understand that you are shortly going to undertake a tour of South India. Kindly do visit Jaffna. I already have the personal invitation of several prominent citizens of Ceylon. We shall arrange everything there. We shall take you by plane from Madras to Jaffna and after your programme there, shall leave you safely back at Madras. You will have no difficulty at all.

You have no idea, Swamiji, of your influence in the South. There is practically none who has not read your books or pamphlets, and who does not literally worship you and follow your teachings. Your name is a bye-word in Ceylon. And, all are anxious to have your Darshan.'

YOUR WORD HAS LIFE-TRANSFORMING POWER

Sri S.N. Mitra was relating to Siva the measures taken by the Government to eradicate the drink-evil. The discussion drifted onto the present state of society and Sri Mitra deplored the depraved moral condition of the youth of the land. 'It would be a very good thing, Swamiji, if you can find time to write small, simple books for school children, on ethics and religion. I envisage graded series of books suitable to the school children at various stages of their career.

Why: there are very good writers already in the educational field, and they can write good books on these subjects?'

'Yes, people can write, Swamiji. Perhaps, Dr. Sampurnanandaji is already in touch with one or two writers for books on these subjects. But what they write will be words only: and that is not what is needed. What we need is the force of spirit, a transforming power in the words that form the lessons in the book. Only you can do that. Your words have a special charm, a compelling force.'

LAST MELA EXPERIENCE

A retired Collector of the U.P. has come to witness the Kumbha Mela arrangements at Hardwar and Rishikesh. He was a Deputy Collector some years ago and was the Mela Officer in charge of the Garhmukteshwar Mela. Siva at once recognised him: and the officer was astonished at Siva's memory.

Yes, Swamiji, I was the Mela Officer at that time when you visited the Garhmukteshwar Mela. And I still remember with great joy the ecstatic Kirtan that you did at Garhmukteshwar on the occasion. As the Mela Officer, I had given permission to the convening of the Satsang where you did ecstatic Kirtan: I still remember that Kirtan scene. I had posted some police officers to look after the arrangements. Soon there were fewer people at the bathing-place than at the place where your Kirtan was held. After the Mela was over, some people complained that the whole Mela had been foiled on account of my permitting you to carry on the Kirtan propaganda, which had become a more or the most important function during the Mela. But, Swamiji, that was the very purpose of the Mela-to enable people to derive inspiration from the direct contact of Realised saints. If I were appointed Mela Officer to any of the Kumbha

Melas, I will do just the same thing again. Millions were benefited by your Darshan and Upadesha at that time.'

15th APRIL, 1950

SOCIAL NATURE vs. SOLITUDE

Srimathi Karina had been invited by Dr. Kailas Nath to a tea party held by all the doctors who were on Kumbha Mela duty and whose work had come to an end. She came back for the night Satsang.

'Was the party nice?' enquired Siva. Did you like it?'

I had just to endure it, Swamiji. It bored me stiff. Thank God, I had taken my Japa Mala with me and I did ten Malas of Japa during the course of the party.'

'Perhaps you wish now that you had not gone?'

'Absolutely, Swamiji.'

'That is why I remain in solitude. When you get a little bit of discrimination, all this worldly activity seems uninteresting and often revolting to you. You long to get out of it and to enjoy the peace of meditation in solitude. There is nothing like solitude if you wish to have peace.

And, Siva added, after a pause, 'But this social nature is very difficult to curb. Man wants to live and move in society. Man is a social animal. He wants company. He wants friends. He takes great delight in parties and social gatherings. It takes a long time to get over this craving for company. Once it is got over, then you enjoy unbroken peace.'

18th APRIL, 1950

NON-VIOLENCE AND THE SANNYASIN

Bhaskaranandaji has started a school for the refugee children in Delhi. Siva was perusing the Report of the School where it had been said that military training was given in the school to boys and girls also.

It is good. The boys and girls will then grow up into good soldiers and courageous men and women. They will be an asset to the country.

What about Sanyasins? Will they begin to impart training to us also?'

A Sannyasin, who was standing nearby, said: Swamiji, in case of national emergencies, we, too, should join the army. For instance, during the recent communal riots, I was very alert and was on the look out for Muslim goondas. If any had encountered me, I would certainly have killed him.'

'No, no. That should not be a Sannyasin's attitude. Not even in defence shall a Sannyasin kill. No, not at all. Death is the most glorious thing for a Sannyasin. If you say that we must defend ourselves or others, then you will not know when you take up the offensive. And, then, you have, while performing the Viraja Homa given 'Abhaya' to all beings. You have declared that no being need be afraid of you, that you will not injure anyone. You are to feel that you are not the body, and that you are the immortal all-pervading Satchidananda Atman. How can you injure anybody? Even if your throat is cut, you should smile and laugh 'Sivoham'. There is no

world for you. Whom will you defend? To a Sannyasin, Ahimsa is an absolute principle.'

22nd APRIL, 1950

SIVANANDA YATRA MANDALI

It is Sankara Jayanthi today. Paramanandaji, who is organising the Sivananda Yatra Mandali (an all-India tour programme), had arranged to take a group photograph of the Mandali personnel. We went to the railway station for a picture.

After this was done, Siva stood on the railway platform in the scorching summer sun, and began to sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan, as also the Song of Instructions. All the station staff were immensely delighted and benefited, too.

On returning to the Ashram, Siva remarked: 'Unless you stitch my lips, I shall go on singing Kirtan at every station platform and talk to people also, even if it results in the complete breakdown of my health.'

25th APRIL, 1950

THE SANNYASIN'S YATRA

Seth Chamanlal of Amritsar has come. He has brought his own car with him in which he wants to take Siva and party to the Ashram's farm in Bibiwala.

Though it was past midnight yesterday, when Siva retired after personally giving to Dr. Kailasnath several letters of introduction to

high officials to help him in his quest of knowledge and opportunities of service. Yet, he was ready at 5.30 a.m.

In the farm, Siva requested Sri Swami Narayananandaji to give some fruits to the labourers' children. Please peel the orange and give.' That is Siva's method: the receiver should not be put to even that difficulty, and must be tempted to eat it at once. Then only is the offering or the worship complete.

Standing amidst the labourers in the hot sun, Siva did Kirtan for over half an hour.

From there to the Goshala of Sri Goswami Ganesh Duttji. It was not in the programme: but the Sannyasin has no programme. I would like to see Sri Goswamiji's Gita Mandir at Hardwar. Then we shall simply drive on the Ganges Canal Road and go back to the Ashram whenever we like.'

'Swamiji, we shall send word to the Ashram that we are not coming now. It involves great strain, and even if it is to..'

'No, no. Don't bother. Just go on. Let them think what they like.'

At the Goshala, Sri Ganesh Duttji was delighted to receive Siva. 'Maharaj, shall I get some tea for you, or milk?"

'Badi Kripa: we just had our breakfast."

"When I come to your Ashram, then you flood me with your hospitality!'

Siva noticed a bottle of horlicks in G.'s hand. Like a child he said: 'If you give me a glass of horlicks, I will take.'

G. showed us round the Goshala. Siva said: This is Brindavan. And, you have Lord Krishna's Amsa.' He did Kirtan.

Then G. took us to the Sanatana Dharma Pratinidhi Sabha's Gita Mandir at Hardwar, recently opened by the President of India.

There were just a few devotees in the temple at that time. Siva stood up and began to sing Kirtan. It was thrilling.

Siva said, after Kirtan: This is a very beautiful temple of the Lord. Sri Goswamiji, even though he still wears the white cloth, is a real Sannyasin who works for the welfare of the world. He has done very great service to Sanatana Dharma and to India. He has established many temples: he has constructed many Dharmashalas: he has brought into being many schools and colleges. He is a great philanthropist. He is an untiring worker.

This is the abode of the Gita. Gita is enshrined here. Gita is a universal scripture. It is the life of India: and India is the life of the world. This is a temple of Gita, from which will radiate the truth throughout the world. The whole world will be uplifted. Truman, Atlee, Stalin-all the leaders of the world will be profoundly influenced by the Gita Swadhyaya, Bhagawat Path and Kirtan that is conducted here.

'May God bless you all! May you all become Jivanmuktas! God bless Sri Ganesh Duttji with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya!'

G. said: 'Swamiji, you have fulfilled the purpose for which the Mandir was established. You have truly performed the opening ceremony. Today the temple has been sanctified.'

I do not know what your programme was for today. I might have disturbed your programme. I am grateful to you for showing me round the beautiful Mandir, and for all the trouble you have taken. Badi Kripa,' said Siva.

Today is a great day for me, Swamiji. You have showered your blessings on us unsolicited. The day has been very well spent. I am overjoyed by your kindness.'

As we were coming back from Hardwar, Sri N. looked at the watch and said: 'Swamiji, it is half past eleven.'!

'Don't look at the watch. That is the Sannyasin's principle. When you have got out of the Ashram, don't think of when to return. Thinking of the time, you may neglect the work on hand. Concentrate all your attention on the work on hand: make it most successful. Your entire life will be fruitful: and you will attain the goal of life also.' When we reached the Ashram, Siva said: Today's function owes its glory to Chamanlalji.'

'Swamiji, I thank God that I brought my car with me. You have purified the car by singing Kirtan in it. The purchase of the car has only today become purposeful.'

30th APRIL, 1950

SATI GODAVARI

Sati Godavari of the Upasani Kanyakumari Sthan of Sakori has come to the Ashram. She and the party were performing Puja in the temple where Siva was present, too. Siva told Sri Judge Saheb who had also come:

'A well-known saintly personality, a lady from Sakori, by name Sati Godavari Mata, has come: she is doing Puja to Lord Viswanath. She is the disciple of Sri Upasani Baba, himself a Mahapurusha, who was the disciple of Sri Sai Baba. Upasani Baba has revolutionised the customs and manners in the land by permitting his lady-disciples to offer Vedic ritualistic worship to the Lord. Sati Godavari recites the Rudram Chamakam, Purusha Suktam, etc., does Abhishekam and worships the Lord in the ceremonial fashion. Now women all over the land will be inspired to follow Sati Godavari Mata's example and will begin to worship the Lord. There will be a welcome regeneration of Indian womanhood. We will once again have ideal women in India, saintly women as we had in the Vedic times-Gargi, Maitreyi, Sulabha, etc'

In the evening, during the Kirtan, Siva sang the following tunes:

Jnana Dev Tukaram

Sainath Upasani

Upasani Godavari

Jnana Dev Tukaram

Mataji felt a thrill of joy when she heard Siva uttering the names of her Gurus: she blushed and looked on the ground when she heard him repeat her own name in devout Kirtan.

After going round the Ashram, she felt: 'How has this Sannyasin been able to do so much single-handed in so short a period? Surely he must be an Avatar.'

MAY, 1950

1st MAY, 1950

SATI GODAVARI WORSHIPS SIVA

Sati Godavari Mata had requested for permission to do Pada Puja. Siva himself went to the Kutir in which she had been lodged.

When after the Puja, she knelt on the floor, and with great veneration touched Siva's feet with her forehead, Siva simultaneously bowed to her with folded palms. It was a great sight to see. A saint worshipping another saint.

STAMMER-CURE

Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar of Gita Bhavan has sent a young boy to Siva. He suffers from stammering.

'Sing Kirtan: you will be all right,' said Siva and at once repeated Om Om OM thrice. He asked the boy to repeat Om along with him for a while.

'Oh, you are all right.'

Yes, Swamiji,' said the boy, astounded at his own unshaking voice.

'Sing the Maha Mantra Kirtan,' said Siva and himself sang the Maha Mantra. The boy followed suit. All this had a miraculous effect.

'Daily sing the Maha Mantra for at least half an hour. The stammering will never come to you again.'

2nd MAY, 1950

SADHUS' CONFERENCE

When Swami Bhaskaranandaji of Delhi requested Siva to preside over a Sadhus' Conference today, Siva at first did not agree, for reasons of ill-health. When B. came and pleaded, Siva at once yielded: Yes, I shall come.' Then he said to us:

'I like to attend spiritual conferences and do my own bit of service in the form of Kirtan. Increasing physical ailment sometimes comes in the way. But, when even a little pressure is applied, I cannot resist. What does it matter if a little more strain is imposed upon this body, if it is for a good cause and if I am able to sing and make others sing the Lord's names?'

He was the first to go to the venue-an hour earlier!

Siva commenced the proceedings with Sankirtan. B. detailed the aim and object of the Conference and said: The main inspiration for the work that has been undertaken has been from Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. He has already indicated the line of action through founding the All-World Sadhus' Federation. What he has been able to do single-handed during the past ten years surpasses estimation: it is indeed a miracle: and none but a Siddha Purusha like Swamiji could have done that. It is really his inspiration that has prompted me to come forward to call this Conference. We depend upon him to sustain us through continued blessings and paternal care, to guide us, to inspire us, to console us, and to lead us along the right path.'

Brahmji, who wanted young Sannyasins to undertake the work, said: 'Swami Sivanandaji is an aged youth. He does not move about from place to place doing Prachar. But he does not belong to the retired group of aged Sannyasins. Even at this age, in spite of the heavy

work that he has to do in connection with the activities of his own Ashram and the Divine Life Society, he has given us a beautiful message. It is thrilling. I am amazed at his energy and enthusiasm.'

During the course of his address Siva said:

India is the land of saints, sages and seers. Each nation has got its own speciality, its own unique feature. In the case of India, the unique feature is that she has always had on her soil saints, seers and sages galore. We can proudly say that there has not been one generation in India that has not had its saintly personages and God-realised men and women.

'Even today, many saints are carrying on the divine work of spreading the message of truth, at various places in this country. The need of the hour is to coordinate all these activities so that the mission might gain greater strength. It is only spiritually awakened Bharat that can spread the message of peace, unity, harmony and bliss. And, the Sadhus alone can do this in this land.

'Should the Sadhus do this work? Should the Sadhus enter Vyavaharic field and preach Dharma (or should they remain in their own Kutirs and caves, spending their time in meditation)? Such Mahatmas are rare nowadays as can declare that the world did not exist in the three periods of time, and they alone can meditate all the twenty-four hours. Youngsters nowadays take a delight in reading the Yoga-Vasishtha and declaring: The world does not exist in the three periods of time.' If there is no salt in the dhal, if their tea is not given at the proper time, they fly into a terrific rage. These people are unfit to study Yoga-Vasishtha. Yoga Vasishtha should be studied by very advanced Sadhakas. Those who have not developed

Para Vairagya, those who are still in the lower stages of Sadhana, should engage themselves throughout the day in Japa, Kirtan, meditation, Swadhyaya and service also. They should serve humanity with Atma-Bhava or Narayana-Bhava. Work for work's sake. Work because such work is a necessary part of your Sadhana. This is not binding. Working with egoism is wrong. Working as a Nimitta is bondage-cutting. Even to work as a Nimitta or an instrument in the hands of the Lord is a very difficult thing: it needs complete self-surrender to the will of the Lord, and therefore complete self-abnegation or destruction of the ego.

'Who can enter into Samadhi? Who can remain in Sahaja Samadhi Avastha throughout the day? Only a Dattatreya or Suka. Even Suka Deva who was always in Samadhi, sang the glories of the Lord. People nowadays think that they can always remain in Samadhi, even before they set their foot on the ladder of Yoga. Delusion. Their Vairagya lasts hardly for two months. They go to a cave and pretend to meditate on Brahman; they imagine it is so easy. After two months, their hidden Vasanas, cravings and desires lull them into Tamasic super-slumber. They are of no use either to themselves or to others. They live the life of beasts.

'How hard it is to develop even one good quality! Cultivate Yama, Niyama, first. Samadhi will supervene by itself. Cultivate Maitri, Karuna, and the other virtues that the Lord has enumerated in the Gita. When can you develop Karuna? Only if you serve humanity with Atma-Bhava or Narayana-Bhava.

'If you wish to serve humanity, if you wish to do Prachar work, then you should have the power to influence the people. You will have to

acquire this through Japa, Kirtan, meditation, Pranayama and cultivation of Deivi Sampath. Then only will people listen to you, will follow you. What a great power is stored in Rama-Nama, it is impossible to describe. But, you will not believe. You have no faith in the Name of the Lord. Think of the great effect produced by one word of insult! When a man abuses you, your blood begins to boil, you at once fly at his throat. Now tell me, has word or name got power or not? If such is the power of a vulgar word, then how much more ought to be the power of the name of the Lord! Not much of argument will avail here. Have full faith. Repeat the Name of the Lord and find out the glorious effect yourself. Drink the nectar of the divine name. You will have within yourself an enormous power with which you can work wonders. You can uproot mountains: you can shake the whole world with the power of the Lord's name. You must have faith: you must have devotion for the Lord.

There are many people nowadays who do one Purascharana of a Mantra. They think that immediately on completion of the Purascharana, they will begin to get money orders or will begin to fly in the air. Such Japa will not help you. You must thirst for God-realisation; and do Japa for the sake of God-realisation. Then and then alone will you develop Adhyatmika Shakti with which you can work for the good of humanity.

I am very glad that through the untiring efforts of Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj, this great organisation has come into being. It is a blessing to humanity. Tyagis alone can do such work: Tyagis alone can really and truly work for the good of humanity. Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Tyagenaikena amritatwamaanasuh. Such is the glory of renunciation.

May this organisation flourish for ever illumining the path to peace, harmony and happiness so that humanity might walk along this noble path and attain its goal!'

Siva attended the afternoon session, too: and was again the first to come! It was hot and someone came with a big fan. Siva declined the service saying: 'No. No. I don't want it. It is good sometimes to endure the heat.' Even in his advanced age, even after achieving the Highest, Siva does not give up the elementary Sadhanas. A model for others to follow!

4th MAY, 1950

WHY GOD CREATED MOSQUITOES?

'I can understand why God created all the good things of the world, Swamiji: but why did He create the mosquito? If it is of no use to anyone, it is a great nuisance to all,' said Rai Bahadur G.M. Modi.

'Nothing in God's creation is entirely useless. Though creation is His play, there is still a need within creation for everything that has been created. Even for the mosquito.'

The mosquito is food for the bat and other birds. God who has created the bat and other birds has provided food for them in the mosquitoes.

Then, the mosquitoes act also as Secretaries to Lord Yama. Due to lack of self-control in human beings, they multiply in vast numbers. There is food scarcity and various other kinds of scarcities. There is overpopulation on the earth. These Secretaries of Lord Yama, the mosquitoes, act as carriers of the malarial germ, and they spread the

disease. Many thousands die of malaria. Earth is relieved of its burden.

Thirdly, there is a very important function for these mosquitoes. They sting you into wakefulness. Every time they sting you, you think of the nature of the world. What a miserable place this is-this world! There are mosquitoes, scorpions, cobras, tigers and various other ferocious animals: scorching summer sun, biting winter cold, dust-storms, snow-storms: wars, riots and quarrels. How would I you like to go to a place where these are absent!

That place where these mosquitoes are absent, is Moksha, the Kingdom of God within you. The mosquitoes remind you of that truth. They instigate you to think of God and to save yourself from the miseries of mundane existence.

'Now you understand that mosquitoes are as necessary as anything else in creation?'

15th MAY, 1950

NAVEENA EKALAVYA RAMAMURTI

A famous archer, Ramamurti demonstrated some rare feats in archery before Siva who keenly appreciated them and conferred upon R. the title of 'Naveena Ekalavya'. R. said:

The success in all these feats does not depend so much upon my own skill as on the powerful and holy presence of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Swamiji is Lord Siva Himself. There is no doubt about this. His face beams with grace and compassion and I get his power and encouragement to perform the feats. As Lord Siva gave the

Pasupata Astra to Arjuna, our Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj gives me today his blessings for success in this great Sastra. Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj ki jai!'

JUNE, 1950

1st JUNE, 1950

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

Justice Chandrasekhara Iyer of Madras and Justice Mazumdar of Calcutta, have come. Siva welcomed them with a Pranama, as usual. Slightly embarrassed, C. prostrated himself before Siva.

'Swamiji, it has been my pious wish for a considerable time now, to have your Darshan. It is my good fortune that I have the opportunity today,' said both of them. Then C. introduced the other retired Judge to Siva: Justice Mazumdar is also the President of the Kalikamliwala Kshetra Committee.'

Siva turned to M.: 'It is very good. The Kshetra is doing very good philanthropic work.'

Justice M. to C: 'Look! I am sitting close by Swamiji and touching him so that I may draw inspiration from him, be blessed by him and purified by him.' And, he nestled close to Siva.

Siva then took C. to his Kutir and to the Ghat. Siva explained: The Mysore Maharani used to like this Ghat very much. This is the seat on which she used to sit and meditate.

'Who would not like it, Swamiji? It is so lovely. The entire place is reverberant with spiritual vibrations. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to visit this holy place and have your Darshan.'

2nd JUNE, 1950

KARMA AND HEART-CULTURE

A proposal to purchase a water-pump in order to make the best use of the engine donated to the Ashram by a devotee, brought Chidanandaji to the office. The discussion turned on to the financial affairs of the Society. C. was explaining that a serious financial crisis was looming large over the entire institution.

The financial condition of the Society may be good or bad. The Vaidji's family ought to be supported by the Society. God wants that we should help them. Theirs is a pitiable lot. Vaidji is dead, leaving the entire family virtually on the street. They have nothing to eat, and no money to purchase their clothes with. When Vaidji was alive, they were living honourably on his meagre means. Now, they have suddenly been thrown into a terrible position. What greater misfortune can there be for respectable people than to suffer from want of food and clothing? We must give them shelter, food and clothing. It is our duty. That is what God wants us to do.

'Sometimes such misfortunes even shake people's faith in God. They will begin to ask 'Is there a God at all?' But, Vaidji's people are truly God-loving. They are even now regular in their Kirtan and Bhajan.

Even though it is bewildering, God has His own purpose for bringing down this calamity on this poor family. He wants to create Vairagya in the lady. And, what is even more important to us, He wants to give us an opportunity for rendering selfless service. Even at the cost of incurring more expenditure, we should support them.

'Some foolish people will ignore such opportunities for rendering selfless service and say: 'Oh, it is their Prarabdha. Each man has to suffer his own Karma.' That is all very good. But, the other man's evil Prarabdha gives YOU an opportunity to render service and

purify yourself. It is foolish to let such opportunities go. It is not real Vedanta: it is lip-Vedanta or Vedantic perversion. It is one of the ways of the evading of our responsibility towards society and towards God. A real Vedantin will deny himself, will put himself to the greatest hardship in the service of others.'

Siva continued: 'God wants us to serve others and to support all the people that resort to us. He who sends these people will also send the wherewithal to maintain them. Their Prarabdha will bring to the Ashram their food, clothing and maintenance. Therefore, worry not.'

3rd JUNE, 1950

You are coming after a long time. Ten years?' said Siva as Major-General A.N. Sharma bowed to him.

'Physically yes, Swamiji. I came here in 1942 last time. But, you are always with me. I see you daily. I am never separate from you, Swamiji. This I have actually experienced through your unbounded grace.'

You are very busy in the service of the nation. That is also good. It is also service of the Lord.'

'But, Swamiji, that is no service at all. Service in the Government is like machines working when the switch is put on. There is no life in such service. These people who are near you are luckier than I. I envy them. They are doing real service to humanity and to the Lord, under your saintly guidance. This is my last year of service, Swamiji. Next April, I will surely be here.'

'Such a good officer like you, the Government would like to retain. They cannot always find an officer with your integrity, nobility, sincerity, spirit of service, and God-fearing nature. An honest officer like you is an asset to the Government of the country.'

'No, no, Swamiji: I am only trying in my humble way to follow your teachings. I am trying to adopt your teachings in my work and daily life. I can be completely satisfied only if I come here and dedicate my life to your holy cause.'

Then Siva introduced several Ashramites, one by one, and described how each one was an expert in his own way, young men of great intelligence, education and culture.

You are a mighty magnet, Swamiji. So, it is no wonder that you have attracted so many needles to you. You are the All here. You are the Spirit or the soul of the Ashram. They are all inspired by your rays only. To me, only you exist in the Ashram.'

The General said to his daughter: 'Kamala, look, what a single man has been able to do. And, that too in such a short time. Many people complain-I am alone. What can a lonely man do?' Look at Swamiji. He came to Rishikesh alone. He had to take his Bhiksha from the Kshetra and work. Look, how he has converted a jungle into a city. Look, what a lot of service is being rendered by him to humanity through this institution. You can also do that, Kamala, if you apply yourself to the task.'

We were coming round the temple. Several Yatris and Sadhus were lying on the temple verandah.

'Who are these?' asked Siva. Yatris, Swamiji.'

'All sorts of people come here. Sadhus, Yatris, young boys who renounce the world: people who wish to take Sannyasa, who wish to practise Yoga: people who have had failures in the world: people with incurable diseases-literally all sorts of people come here. I think this is more an asylum than an Ashram.'

This is a real Ashram, Swamiji, in every sense of the term,' said the General.

'Everyone comes here and takes food in the kitchen. I do not even ask from where the man is coming. He is free to remain here as long as he likes. During his stay here, whatever be the reason for his coming here, he is trained in service, Kirtan, Yoga Asanas, etc.: and even if he leaves the Ashram later, he is a transformed personality. All people requiring mental solace and peace come here. '

Then Siva said: You should see Swami Chidanandaji. He is a saint. He is a genius. He is a powerful speaker, writer, and there is no one like him in service. Lepers and cholera patients, even dogs and birds receive the kindest treatment at his hands. He takes the greatest delight in service. He is an able doctor by experience. I saw one day an aged Sadhu who was suffering from leprosy, lying on the roadside. I had some milk and food given to him. A little later C. personally went to the patient, led him to the Ashram, and is attending on him day in and day out. The case is so advanced that all his fingers and toes have been eaten away by the disease. The bones are sticking out in the hands. The sores are raw. No one would even dare to go near him. But C. daily dresses him, feeds him and takes motherly care of the patient. I will show you the patient.

There was a dog here which was suffering from an ulcer: it emitted an unbearable foul smell. C. dressed the dog daily without feeling the least Ghrina or discomfort. He found a parrot lying paralysed in the jungle: he picked it up and provided a beautiful bed, pillow and cover, and fed it and nursed it nicely. It is very rare to find a heart like his. He is a saint truly.'

They all went into the studio. The General and his daughter were wonder-struck. Kamala asked: 'How many photos have you taken so far?' And, even before Padmanabhanji could reply, the General said: Infinite number. In the Ashram of the Infinite, everything is infinite.' P. then showed them the albums containing some of the photographs taken by him so far. When they had finished with one album, the General exclaimed: 'It is enough for someone to write a book of the history of the institution.' And, he looked aghast when six more albums were produced before him: 'No no, you can write seven books on the history of the Society. Marvellous!'

4th JUNE, 1950

GENERAL SHARMA

The I.A.S. probationers accompanied when he took General Sharma round the Ashram this morning. Afterwards, they said: 'Swamiji, we shall take leave of you now. We are going to Garuda Chatty now: and, on our return, we shall leave for Delhi.'

'Come here again', began Siva: and spend a week or a month. Recharge yourself with fresh spiritual energy. That will stand you in good stead in your work, nay, in your entire life.

Here is General Sharma who makes a Yoga of his office work. He has understood the secret of Karma Yoga. He has studied Gita, Upanishads and Ramayana. He takes a real interest in his official duties. He discharges them well. He thereby earns great merit here, purifies his mind and qualifies himself for the descent of divine knowledge, too.

You should all follow his noble example. Do not take your office work as a mere routine work imposed upon you by the government. Do not work merely in order to earn your living. Feel all the time that in your way and within your allotted sphere of work, you are serving the Lord's children.

You are the embodiments of wisdom. You will each one of you rule over your district for the protection of whose population you are responsible. You are, therefore, the Amsa of Vishnu. Remember this point very well. When you discharge your normal official duties, therefore, feel that you are but an instrument in the hands of Lord Vishnu, and that He is doing His work of Preservation through you. That is the proper attitude of a Karma Yogi.

To be a perfect Karma Yogi, you should develop in yourself many virtues-the Deivi Sampath enumerated by the Lord in the Gita: Amanitwam, Adambhitwam, Ahimsa, etc. You must be honest, truthful, loving, forgiving, humble and simple. You must be ideal citizens. You must set an example to the people over whose destinies you preside. Then and then alone will you have really justified the Lord's choice of you for this distinguished service.

'Please be regular in your study of the Gita. Try diligently to put into practice the Lord's teachings in the Gita. Then you will not only win

the love of the people and the government: but you will also become a saint revered and respected all over the world-you will attain Moksha in this very birth.'

General Sharma added a few words: 'India needs honest administrators. That is what she lacks now. You remember the beautiful song in English which Swamiji sang last night-the Song of Eighteen Ities? If you bear that in mind always and strive in every way to practise the eighteen ities in your daily life, you would have achieved what Swamiji wants you to achieve.'

When, later, we went to the Gita Bhavan, Siva himself (in the fashion of a guide!) explained the main features of the Gita Bhavan, to General Sharma:

'In every room, there is a painting of the Lord. Along the verandahs and everywhere in the building, you will find Gita Slokas inscribed in various forms on the walls. On this verandah, there are eighteen pictures on the walls, representing the most important theme of the eighteen chapters of the Gita. In the Hall upstairs; you will find marble slabs on which the entire Gita is inscribed.' etc., etc.

Jayadayalji wanted that Siva should give Darshan to an ailing devotee there: Siva let the General and his daughter examine him. 'Diabetes,' said the General: 'He should take a course of insulin injections.'

'Swamiji,' said Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar, these orthodox people have strange sentiments about taking medicines. They think it is against the Sastras.'

'No, no. That is wrong. Medicines are also God's gifts to man. And, especially when they are not of animal-origin, why should he not take them? Human life is precious. Let him take insulin. It is not against the Sastras.'

The devotee who was so adamant all throughout his illness which had already kept him in bed for the past nearly two months, now yielded and agreed to take the injection.

Siva at once closed his eyes and said: 'Let us do Kirtan now,' and sang the Maha Mantra thrice, and he was followed by the people around. The entire place was filled with the vibrations of the Maha Mantra. Then Siva repeated the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra also.

He then said to the patient: 'Repeat the Maha Mantra and the Mrityunjaya Mantra also. You will be all right. You will be in a position to go to the Satsang tomorrow. The Lord's Omnipotent Shakti fills these Mantras.'

In the afternoon, General Sharma had expressed the desire to meditate in Siva's Kutir for a few minutes. He had promised to come at 2.30. At 2.25 Siva noticed that the General had not come and so got out of his Kutir, ready to wake up the General, if necessary. 'When I have something to do, I cannot even take rest. I am anxious not to miss even a little opportunity to be of service. Please call Sharmaji.' As Siva said this, he noticed Sharmaji coming down the hill. Siva gave the General a military salute which the General reciprocated in proper form.

A little later....the car's engine hummed OM....or was it only the echo of Siva's loud OM...and the General and his daughter took

leave of Siva, Ganga and the Himalayas, with folded palms which they waved again and again.

12th JUNE, 1950

BASTI AND VAMANA DHAUTI

Sri Somareswar of Muzaffarnagar performed the Jala Basti this morning. S. got into the Ganges: when the water had reached his knees, he sat down. After a complete expulsion of the breath, he did Uddiyana Bandha. All the wind in the intestines is now expelled. He released the Bandha: and did the Nauli Kriya. A vacuum is automatically created in the colon. Naturally water is drawn into the colon. S. later expelled this water. He had been able to draw a couple of pints of water: and the expelled water, too, was clean, denoting that the large colon was already clean.

Siva explained the technique and the advantage of the Kriya, to the assembled Sadhakas. This will keep your intestines clean and thus promote your general health. You will never suffer from constipation. You will be free from disease. You will enjoy radiant health. Not only this: all your Nadis will be purified. The Prana will pervade your entire body. You will have peace of mind and spiritual progress also. All of you should practise Basti and do it occasionally.'

S. said: It is all due to your grace only, Swamiji. I learnt this from your book only. I used to practise Uddiyana. One day, when I did Uddiyana while yet in the water, I found that I had automatically drawn some water also in. Then I regularised the practice with the help of your book.'

Then S. and Sri Swami Satchidanandaji performed the Jala Dhauti. They drank water-five or six glassfuls-and then tickled their throat with the help of their fingers. All the water was immediately vomited, and with it phlegm and bile, too. Swami S. was able to do the Dhauti without the help of the fingers.

Siva greatly eulogised the proficiency of the two adepts and described the glory of Jala Dhauti: 'What Basti is for the lower parts of the alimentary canal, Dhauti is for the upper part. The stomach is cleaned with the help of the Dhauti. You do not need to use the stomach-tube. You will not suffer from indigestion or biliousness or from phlegm-trouble. You will have good digestion, and a clear brain. Initially, you will have to take the help of your fingers to bring out the water from the stomach. By gradual practice, the water will be ejected from the stomach merely by the practice of the Uddiyana Bandha.

'Our ancients were practising these Kriyas as a matter of course. They used to cleanse their alimentary canal frequently through the Dhauti and the Basti. Therefore, they were healthy and enjoyed long life. If you also regularly practise these exercises and Kriyas, you will also enjoy radiant health and long life. May God bless you all!'

One remarkable feature during the whole performance was that when S., after performing Uddiyana inside the water, came out to eject the water from within, Siva encouraged him to perform the act, too, right in front of him, practically with his back to Siva: and Siva's countenance did not register the least disgust to witness this none too pleasant a sight.

S. was shy in the beginning to pull his cloth up to his waist. But, Siva quickly encouraged him: 'Why do you feel shy? Throw away the cloth. All are endowed with the same organs. Just because we have been hiding them for a long time, we feel shy to expose them now. If we had from childhood hidden our face also from public view, we would feel shy to expose it to the public.'

14th JUNE, 1950

INTELLECT AND YOGA

Srimathi K. Saberwal, Professor of Philosophy, in the Lucknow University has come. As soon as she came in to have Siva's Darshan, Siva handed her a copy of his commentary on the Brahma Sutras. A discussion ensued.

'Swamiji, how was it possible for Sri Sankaracharya to have devotion to Sakara Murti when he was an Adwaitin and his philosophical treatises prove that he believed in the nameless and the formless.

'It was because Jnana and Bhakti are essentially the same. Look at the Stotras that he has composed. They indicate clearly that he had developed devotion to a very high degree. Atma-Nivedan or self-surrender leads to Jnana. And, Jnana is synonymous with Para-Bhakti.

People nowadays condemn Bhakti and think that it is inferior to Jnana. They have no understanding of Bhakti. They think that they can jump at once to Jnana Yoga Sadhana. They have really no faith in God. They just acquire some intellectual conception of God. This

does not serve them. Jnana Yoga without the necessary preparation is of no use.'

Then, Swamiji, who is fit for Jnana Yoga Sadhana?'

'When there is only the veil of ignorance, when there is no Mala (impurity) in the mind and when there is no Vikshepa (vacillation) in the mind, then one can proceed to Jnana Yoga Sadhana. Mala can be removed only through Nishkamya Karma Yoga and Vikshepa through Bhakti. In the case of the vast majority of persons, all the three Yogas are necessary-Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga.'

That is perfectly true, Swamiji: your Yoga of Synthesis alone can enable Sadhakas nowadays to advance on the spiritual path. But, nowadays we have unfortunately developed the intellect which proves a hindrance at every stage. It does not allow us to have faith in God or to practise devotion. It questions and doubts.'

'Intellect ought not to be allowed to put obstacles in our way. Intellect ought to be trained in such a way that it should help us in our faith in God and Bhakti.'

Yes, Swamiji. That way I think our grandmothers were better off than we are.'

Siva laughed.

Meditate early in the morning and in the evening also. Do Vichara. Intellect may or may not believe in a thing which is beyond the senses and the mind. Intellect may not believe in bliss apart from

objects. But, the state of deep sleep proves that bliss is in reality not in the objects or in the contact of senses with the objects.rblas

'By bliss is not meant pleasure!. Pleasure is the other side of pain. Pleasure and pain are inseparable. Our goal is not this pleasure. Our goal is the Absolute Bliss. Brahman or the Atman alone can be that Bliss. For, in the Awareness of Brahman, there is no duality; there is oneness. That is Truth. That is Consciousness also. And, in that Consciousness of Truth alone is there Bliss.

That Bliss is indescribable. Even the deep sleep bliss is indescribable. You wake up and say: 'I had a delightful sleep.' But, when you are asleep, you are not able to describe the experience of sleep. It is like the state of a man who had lost a ring in a pond, dives into the pond, finds the ring, but is unable to say: 'I have found the ring', and is able to say this only on coming to the surface of the water. Each one of us has to experience this bliss for oneself.'

'What a blessed thing it would be for one to realise this, Swamiji. I am tired of theory, theory and theory. I have to teach philosophy to my students. I know Vedanta in theory only. I tell them what the books contain. But, I have no knowledge of the Reality. It is a miserable state. I feel like throwing away everything and coming here and spending the rest of my life in meditation."

Theory is good. For it elevates your thought and brings up the ideal again and again before you. It stimulates Atma-Vichara. Gradually the Truth will dawn on you.

'Meditate. Meditate regularly. You will understand everything.'

Then Srimathi Saberwal informed Siva that she was repeating Gayatri also.

That is wonderful. Gayatri is a great Mantra which nicely combines Saguna and Nirguna. Now you have yourself admitted that you do combine Jnana Yoga Sadhana with Bhakti. You cannot separate them. And, besides you are working in the University and teaching philosophy to thousands of girls. That is very great service. You are moulding their character and you are placing before them the high ideals of Vedanta. That is Nishkamya Karma Yoga of a very high degree. At the same time, try to feel I am Akarta: I am Abhokta: I am Sakshi: I am Satchidananda'. Then you will progress rapidly on the path of practical Sadhana.'

That is the difficulty always, Swamiji. We do work: but we do not do it in the spirit of selfless service. We work for money or to fulfill our earthly ambitions.'

It is true. But, by repeatedly trying to raise up the Vedantic feeling, it will one day be possible to get established in the idea. You may fail a thousand times. That need not bother you. But, after each failure, when you rise up, you will rise up stronger than you were before. Nothing is lost. Every effort takes you nearer the goal. When you get a few days' leave, come here and spend the vacation in silent contemplation and intense Sadhana. Once the mind realises that there is bliss in Sadhana and meditation, it will not leave it. You will then be established in Yoga. May God bless you!'

15th JUNE, 1950

NATURE CURE PROFESSOR

Sri Kameswara Sarma, son of the famous Sri K. Lakshmana Sarma of Pudukotah, the father of Nature Cure in India, has come. He was cordially received by Siva who quickly entered into a discussion with him on Naturopathy. This is Siva's secret of success with men of all types, temperaments and talents: everyone becomes his at first sight, for Siva with his versatile personality is at once able to engage them in their own fond game, stimulate them in their own pet topic, and make them feel that 'Here is an appreciative listener into whose ears I can pour my knowledge without being contradicted.' This is a great consolation when they do not get a friendly ear anywhere else in the world where vanity rules.

At the conclusion of a series of lectures by Sri Sarma at the Ashram, today, Siva gave the following talk:

'We are all thankful, not only thankful, but highly grateful to Sri Kameswara Sarmaji for delivering this series of lectures on the sacred science of naturopathy.

'Nature is our kind and all-powerful mother. She protects us all in every way: she provides our food: and she gives us disease also to cleanse our system.

'All the animals obey the laws of nature. It is only man with his little vain intellect, with his little knowledge, who violates the laws of nature and then suffers. Man is endowed with discrimination. He should be the first to obey the laws of nature and enjoy eternal life.

'Health is most essential for a Sadhaka. Without good health, you cannot do Sadhana. Therefore, it is all the more important that all of you should take the lessons that Sri Sarmaji has taught you, to heart,

and put them into practice. Then only will you realise its full benefit.

'Sri Sarmaji has been good enough to deliver his most illuminating lectures during the past three days. It is a great service to you all. He has rendered a service which you cannot easily repay. The only way you can pay your homage to him is to follow his precepts, and derive the maximum benefit from his lectures.

I am his foremost disciple here. I have been keenly. listening to his lectures with very great interest. I have taken notes of his talks. How many of you have done so? You must at once take notes of all the lectures that you attend. Then you should put all the good ideas into actual practice. Then only will you be benefited.

"Sri Kameswara Sarma and his revered father Lakshmana Sarma as also his brothers are all doing great service to the humanity. Even though they are leading the household life, they are in fact Sannyasins only.

Sri Lakshmana Sarma is rendering pure selfless service unto humanity. He does not demand fees from his patients. He effects a radical cure: and more than anything else, he leads the patients for ever after along the path of life natural.

'Only if all of you, who live here, practise naturopathy diligently, will Sri Sarma be encouraged to come here again and again. You should take good naturopathic resolves, stick to them, and you should, when he comes here next time, show him that you have been true followers of naturopathy.

'Be true to yourself. That is the most essential thing. All other forms of creation are true to themselves, the elements are true to themselves. But, it is only this self-willed, egoistic man who falls an easy victim to cunningness, crookedness and falsehood. Habits like keeping a pinch of salt hidden in the pocket when there is saltless diet in the Ashram (on Ekadashi day) are dangerous. That shows that you have no control over your tongue. True spiritual progress is not possible without the strictest control over the senses.

The mind craves for certain kinds of Rajasic and Tamasic food only because you have not trained it to enjoy Sattvic food. Once you experience the bliss of fasting, you will long for the day when you can fast. You will look eagerly forward to Ekadashi. You will look eagerly forward to the saltless diet on Sunday, if you realise what incalculable benefits such a diet bestows on you.

'Fasting is, besides being a potent curative agent, a beautiful Sadhana also. Watch: what a peaceful mind you have on the fasting day. Real prayerful mood will come only when the stomach is empty. You will meditate more peacefully and for a longer period on the day you fast.

'It is not possible for anyone to convince you of the efficacy of fasting, or of water-cure, or of the glory of Sattvic diet. You will have to practise and experience the results for yourself.

'May you all lead the life natural and attain health and longevity. May Lord bless Sri Lakshmana Sarma and Sri Kamesvara Sarma and brothers with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Atma-Jnana.'

22nd JUNE, 1950

SIVANANDA MANDIR: FOUNDATION STONE LAID

At 10 a.m. we all assembled near the Viswanath Mandir. The happy function fixed for today then began. Chidanandaji led the Kirtan: Krishnanandaji chanted Shanti Patha. 'Sat-Guru Maharaj ki Jai'-a powerful Jaya Jaya kar rose from twelve feet beneath earth's surface, where the devotees of Siva were witnessing Sri Narayanaswamiji lay the foundation-stone for the Sivananda Mandir.

Sri Swami Chidanandaji then explained the significance of the great event, in an eloquent speech full of divine emotion.

'Every external ritual has got its corresponding inner significance. In what we are doing today, the ritual is a very simple one: but the meaning that lies hidden in it is pround. We lay the foundation for a Mandir in which our revered Gurudev will be immortalised. At the same time, we take upon ourselves the vow that we shall perpetuate for all time to come the great mission which he has espoused, of which he has been the founder, the mission of Sadhana, the mission of awakening man to the purpose of life, the mission of awakening the latent divinity in man. We undertake that we shall, till the last breath lasts in us, devote our entire life to this great cause. Thus, we shall make our Gurudev live in our heart for ever and ever.'

THE GREATER ASHRAM

The Parliament Member, Sri Tirumala Rao, is at Ananda Kutir again, on a flying visit. Sincere believers, once they taste the joy of a saint's proximity, will never miss a chance of drinking again and again at the fountain-source of peace.

As Sri T. and party were taking their meals, Sri R. Ramakrishna of the New Delhi Secretariat, mentioned, that he was acquainted with Siva since 1939, when he first visited the modest four-roomed tenement in a jungle. He admired this phenomenal growth of Siva's work.

This is nothing,' said Sri T. Think of the world-wide spread of Swamiji's teachings. Just think of the millions of people who have been brought nearer to God, in whom the moral-conscience has been awakened by Swamiji's message. That is far more magnificent work than this one of building up a big Ashram, a great achievement though it is.'

Then T. turned to the several young Sannyasins who were serving him, and said: 'Look at the number of young and able men that he has drawn towards himself, and whom he is leading along the holy path.'

ASHRAMS AND FOUNDERS

A devotee said that a certain Ashram, after the passing away of the founder, had lost its 'spiritual atmosphere'.

Siva at once grew grim and serene. The responsibility for placing his mission on sound basis lies with the saint who founds an Ashram or institution, as well as his disciples. The saint must so train his disciples that they will, on his departure from the earth-plane, be able to take over the mission from him and run it with equal efficiency.

'At the same time, it is the duty of every true disciple to follow the footsteps of his Guru, to endeavour to grow into his likeness-to

become like the Guru. He should then develop a great zeal to carry on the Guru's mission. Then and then alone will the mission be successfully carried on for all time. Look at the way the Ramakrishna Mission is organised and run.'

JULY, 1950

3rd JULY, 1950

ARE JIVANMUKTAS REBORN?

Today is the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University anniversary. It is celebrated during the morning class with special Kirtan, decoration, discourses etc. Chidanandaji presented the second annual report of the University.

After the class, Siva and Sri Tirumal Rao were talking to each other. One of the most interesting points, and the one that reflects Siva's attitude to Moksha, is this:

Sri T. asked: 'Swamiji, I find in a few places like Nagore, Shirdi, Tiruvannamalai, and the Andhra village where a boy-saint is sunk in Samadhi, and Rishikesh, ever full of Santi and a kind of spiritual bliss. May it be, Swamiji, that these places which have had the impress of the saint's personality, his Tapasya and Siddhi, on the very atmosphere, retain that sanctity for a long time?'

'Yes, yes,' was Siva's reply: 'And, not only that: the saint himself may live in those places. The liberated sage has the option to merge in Brahman or to live in a subtle form and carry on the work of Lokasamgraha, guiding aspirants, awakening in people a religious fervour and so on. This motive is manifested in some Jivanmuktas in accordance with God's Supreme Will. Therefore, the places in which the saint practised Tapas and attained Siddhi, which might again be chosen by the Invisible Spirit of the saint as its permanent abode, becomes the abode of the saint's divine qualities-peace, bliss and wisdom.'

8th JULY, 1950

SIVANANDA YATRA MANDALI GOES FARTHER

Nature, who keeps Siva's cosmic house, had sent a welcome shower in the morning, sprinkling water on the roads between Rishikesh and Hardwar, imparting to the whole landscape a freshness-a smile of joyous greeting and to the whole atmosphere, a coolness. When the house had thus been cleaned, she lit the bright lamp, the Sun, which had temporarily been put out during the cleaning-ceremony. At 2 p.m., the sky cleared, and the vast blue canopy had just a few silk-cotton clouds hanging here and there: the sun shone brightly, but his heat had been already counteracted by the morning shower.

Suspense everywhere-what is afoot? For which God's sake is all this preparation?

Two heavily decorated buses stood at the entrance to Sivanandanagar. So much had been done so silently by Swami Paramanandaji, that Siva himself was surprised to hear at 3.15 the Anandavani Loudspeaker singing his recorded songs.

'Paramanandaji is working wonders,' said Siva as he got into the bus: and to the accompaniment of 'Sivananda Maharaj ki Jai', the vehicle leapt forward. The bus sped forward: but faster than the car was the soul-stirring Kirtan Dhwanis that emanated from the Anandavani which travelled in the car.

We reached the Gita Mandir at Hardwar. A significant point is that Siva, though he had not been informed about the day's programme, did not ask one question about the arrangements. He was content to take things as they came: the attitude of a true Sannyasin. And, P.

had seen to the minutest details of the entire celebration so that the maximum service is rendered to the citizens of Rishikesh and Hardwar. The entire day's function was carried through to success with clock-like precision.

Siva roared OM and the entire audience joined him-an audience of more than 500. The building shook and responded. Then followed Kirtan. I held up the loudspeaker, but Siva brushed it aside saying: 'I don't need it.' Nor did he need it: for his voice could be heard by all even at the farthest end of the hall.

How he made them sing the Lord's names! The Hall was resounding with His names. 'Kirtan is the easiest and surest way to God,' said Siva. 'It is difficult to practise Hatha Yoga, and awaken the Kundalini through Asanas and Pranayama. It is difficult to study Vedanta, understand its secrets and enter into deep meditation. But it is easy to repeat the Lord's names. Kirtan cools down the three fires. Kirtan destroys the five Kleshas. Kirtan alone removes the three kinds of great obstacles-Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana-to the perception of the splendour of the Atman. Three kinds of Sadhanas are prescribed for the removal of these obstacles-Karma Yoga for the removal of Mala, Bhakti Yoga for steadying the mind and removal of Vikshepa, and Jnana Yoga for tearing the veil (Avarana) of ignorance. Kirtan alone can do all these: sing the Lord's names with Bhava and Sraddha-Mala, Vikshepa and Avarana, all the three will be removed. You will have Sakshatkara of the Supreme Lord.

'How easy it is. You can repeat the Lord's name after or before taking bath: wherever you are, you can sing His names. Even when you prepare bread, you can sing His names.

So saying, Siva began his Kirtan (at the same time clapping his hands-as you do when you prepare bread.)

Jaya Siya Ram Jaya Jaya Siya Ram

The audience which consisted of a large number of Punjabi women rose up to Sivas' expectations: all the women at once understood Siva, were thankful to him for this great Upadesha which they could translate into daily and hourly practice, and they repeated the Kirtan-Dhwani-most of them visibly moved-'Sadhana. can be so easy!"

Immediately after, Siva sought out the usual Katha-Vachaka at the Mandir who used to read the Bhagavatha, and, to the astonishment of the crowd, reverently touched his feet!

A similar function at the famous Hari-ki-Pauri (the bathing ghat at Hardwar), on the bank of the holy Ganga. After the function at the ghat, we went to the water-front. Siva visits the spacious ghat after a long time. Like a child, he admired the tower, the other newer constructions and dived into his memory to recollect the older ones: Yes, that temple was there previously. This is a new construction."

I have slept on this platform underneath the clock tower when I was in Swarg Ashram and when I used to come here with Chand Narayan Harkuli. Even when I first came to Hardwar in 1923, I had to sleep here one night, strange as it was then. I went to a Dharmashala: but someone in the Dharmashala objected to my staying there I could not understand what the objection was as I did not know Hindi; and I quietly left the place and slept here.'

We returned to the Ashram at 11 p.m.

11th JULY, 1950

DO IT NOW

'Not tomorrow or the day after: but, now itself! They may change their mind later on and go away. We may not then have the opportunity of rendering our service to them. Bring the books now: I will sign them and you should hand them over to Sri Rao immediately,' said Siva when Nityanandaji told him that a Visitor (Sri Ramachandra Rao) would be staying at the Ashram for a few days and that Siva might give him some books tomorrow or the day after.

This is not a motto or an ideal with Siva. It is his inborn trait. He cannot put a thing off to 'tomorrow-his life itself is one long illustration of this principle. Often his disciples are unable to keep pace with him: they sometimes find him a very hard taskmaster: but no one can fail to recognise that he does not tell others alone to do-it-now. He himself is zealous in his desire to do-it-now.

Siva then explained: This is one of the most important rules in Karma Yoga. Opportunities come and go. A Karma Yogi should take time by the forelock and do-it-now. He should be ever alert and vigilant and utilise every opportunity for service. When one thing is put off for 'tomorrow', then other similar works accumulate around it, and then the opportunity is lost. Procrastination is the greatest enemy of a Karma Yogi.'

The books were brought and Siva autographed them immediately, saying at the same time: 'What you wish to do tomorrow, do today:

what you wish to do in the afternoon, do in the forenoon. Then you will grow into a real Karma Yogi.'

BANI BAI DOES KALAKSHEPAM

The Lord provided an opportunity almost immediately for the demonstration by Siva of this unique trait in him.

Sri Ramachandra Rao introduced a lady who had accompanied him to Badrinath. This is Bani Bai, Swamiji. For the past twenty years, she has been doing Hari Katha Kalakshepam in South India. In fact, she wanted to conduct a Katha-Kalakshepam here also.....

Without a moment's hesitation, Siva said: Then I will have it arranged now itself. Oh Rajagopalji, ring the bell. Call Palji for Tabla. Get the harmonium and the Tanpura. Call everybody. Purushottham, bring some sugar-candy and black-pepper. Keep some water here. Vishwanath, spread the carpets. Call the neighbours also. Nityanandji, get some Prasad for distribution after the Katha.' In five minutes, Bani Bai had already commenced the Katha Kalakshepam.

He said to her: You are a versatile scholar, too, besides being a first-rate musician. What a fund of knowledge and wisdom you have put into the Katha! There was ample humour, educative humour also. It was wonderful. You have Saraswati's grace.'

20th JULY, 1950

A TEST OF TRUE SANNYASA

'How is Sri S. at the Viswanath Bhag: have you sent him all the provisions necessary for his maintenance there?'

'Swamiji, I offered to do so: but S. prefers to take Bhiksha from the Kshetra and do some Seva at the garden,' replied Chidanandaji.

'It is good as a measure of training. But, why does he do so now? Is it because he had a petty quarrel with Sri

'Yes, Swamiji. Even when S. was here after the incident, he did not feel quite at home and was only waiting for the garden work to be started.'

That is not good, said Siva. The true Sannyasa spirit is not properly understood even by very many Sannyasins themselves. Of course, Virakthi, solitude, observance of Mowna, living on Bhiksha, constantly chanting OM may all be some of the external characteristics of a monk, but quite apart from all this is the real inner Bhava which constitutes the basic essence of the Sannyasa-spirit. This is the absolute dispassionate sameness to all the pairs of opposites-heat and cold, pain and pleasure, grief and joy, failure and success, insult and honour. The Sannyasin receives and regards them all with the same Bhava and with calm forbearance. A Sannyasin is Dwandwaatita. To him, friend and foe are alike, and praise and blame have no difference. How is this so? Why is this so? Because the true Sannyasin is above body. His Drishti should not be based upon Dehatma-Bhavana. No, the Sannyasin always ceaselessly tries to live in the thought that he is Pure Spirit. 'Dehonaham, Jeevo Naham' is his attitude. 'Nitya Suddha Buddha Satchidanandoham' is his constant Bhavana. When he performs the Viraja Homa at the time of taking Sannyasa, he offers up his everything into the Kunda, including his Pancha-Koshas with the Karma and Jnana Indriyas, Pranas, Antahkarana, and Aham-

Bhavana. Thus, from that moment onward, he is pure Chit. Thus he comes to regard all things that are said of, done to or experienced by the body as having absolutely no concern with him. The Sannyasin should by all means be unshakably established in the serene tranquility of his essential blissful spiritual nature.

If a Sannyasin does not strive to manifest spiritual Bhava, then who else is supposed to do this? Moving with people of diverse temperaments and simultaneously endeavouring to keep up this inner Bhava will alone help him make this Bhava pucca within him. To get easily offended by adverse criticism, a little harsh treatment or unpopularity and become agitated and to leave the place and go away is a sign that he has failed in sticking to his Sannyasa-Bhava. His ego is still grounded in the physical body only. He has been at once affected and upset by something done to the body. A Sannyasin has no body. How absurd to get upset by something said to this mere temporary garment that you are wearing, which is only to be thrown away at a moment's notice!

'A Sannyasin should have no Abhimana. It is Abhimana which makes one get offended easily at every trifle. Too much touchiness shows that one has not at all got rid of the idea of self-importance, the Ahamta or superior ego-sense. This is real death to a Sannyasin. Maana-Abhimana is rampant inside. Keen self-analysis alone will help severe a Sannyasin from the self-delusion that he is established in Sannyasa.

'What to say of a little disrespect or insult: even if anyone is to beat a Sannyasin with shoe or slipper, or cut his throat with a knife-even then he should remain peaceful and perfectly unperturbed. A

garland of rose flowers put around his neck or a dirty shoe hurled at his head should both mean the same to him as a Sannyasin. Of course, the perfect Bhava does not come in its fullness all at once: but even then, every Sannyasin worth the name should strive every minute towards the attainment of this Atma-Bhavana. Under certain circumstances, there may be a little agitation in the beginning. A sudden insult, an extreme experience, some harshness or disrespect, may no doubt agitate a Sannyasin somewhat for a little time. Perhaps, for a whole day or even two days in some cases. Perhaps more if he was of a very sensitive nature. But, ultimately the Sannyasa-spirit must prevail. Viveka and Vichara must set working at once. Who am I? What is insult or honour to me-the Pure Atman that I am? What is all this transitory experience of this perishable body? It is unreal, petty, of no account and as such not worth my consideration. I am in truth blissful nameless formless infinity.' Moreover, for what happens to the external body, who is to blame? Everything comes to this body according to its Prarabdha Karma. It is simply getting its due. How foolish to seek to put the blame upon someone else for this!' Thus analyses the earnest Sannyasin and keeps his peace.

'Such actual test in the field of active service helps to indicate one's inner progress towards the ideal of Sannyasa. They afford an invaluable training ground for the Sanyasin to perfect himself. To the Nivritti-Sannyasin also Vyavahara (not Loukika or secular Vyavahara, but Paramarthika, unattached selfless Vyavahara) gives much-needed scope for practical spirituality.

'Accept all experiences in a spirit of joy. Meet all difficulties and trials with serenity and fortitude. Remember, that to you there is

neither trouble nor trial, for you are the Pure Atman. Sometimes, some Karma may affect the mind a little. But it is a mere passing cloud only. Brush it aside, and shine again with all the effulgence of your true spiritual splendour. Let daily Vyavahara mean for you so many welcome opportunities to manifest and to give expression to your true inner spiritual nature. Learn the secret of regarding everything only from this Atmic Viewpoint. Dehatma Buddhi will vanish and nothing will affect you in the least for you will never forget that you are the Pure Atman and Atman alone. Jai Ho!'

21st JULY, 1950

B.A. AT ANANDA KUTIR

'First you should give up the B.A. Abhimana. You have good learning: you are intelligent: you have very high qualifications. But, this Big Abhimana will hinder your progress. Therefore, renounce it,' said Siva to a young graduate and journalist who sought admission to the Ashram but showed his willingness to do only (or mainly) literary work.

'In the case of a spiritual aspirant, B.A. should denote Be Alert, and Bow to All. You should be ever vigilant and be ever ready to do every kind of work. You should take part in all the activities of the Ashram. Literary work alone will not do. You should help in wrapper-writing. You should learn the magazine work. You should be able to type articles for journals. You should, at the same time, be prepared to carry water to the kitchen, or sweep the road. Then you will shine as a true B.A. (Best Adhikari), as a pillar of the institution.'

HOW TO SERVE GOD

I was studying this book, Swamiji: so, I could not attend the Satsang at night' Sri K. said this when he was questioned by Siva why he was absent for the night Satsang.

The other day you said that you had diarrhoea and so could not attend the Satsang. Now you say you were reading: so, you did not attend. Tomorrow, you will have some other excuse.

'You should question yourself. If you don't like it, then I will not question you anymore. But, you should question yourself and ask yourself 'What for have I come here? Am I doing what is necessary to achieve my aim?'

If you work in an office and earn Rs. 50 a month, you are ever ready to serve the petty master there. You are ever ready to obey him: 'Yes, Sir', you say for everything. You have renounced the whole world and come here to attain the highest wisdom. Here, you should not expect a master who would bully you and extract work (Sadhana) from you. You should be your own master. You should question yourself rigorously and even punish yourself if you are not doing all that you can to evolve.

'Obedience, adhering to the discipline of the Ashram, humility-all these Sadhu-qualities you have to develop yourself. No one will enforce them on you. You should find out the daily routine of the place where you are staying and automatically fall in line with it. That shows you are a good aspirant. If you do not conform to the discipline of the Ashram and go your own self-willed way, then it means you have not disciplined yourself.

'No one need impose discipline upon you. For a moment, put yourself in the other man's position. Just think for a moment that you are yourself conducting the Ashram, and that you yourself have instituted the daily Satsang. There are several Ashramites. Would you or would you not expect all of them to attend the Satsang?"

'I will, Swamiji.'

Then, is it not your duty to attend the Satsang without even being told to do so? When there is a common function, if all the people attend the function, there is a special charm in it. It would be glorious."

29th JULY, 1950

THE GURU TEACHES BY EXAMPLE

Today is the sacred Guru Purnima.

Since early morning several Sadhakas, Sannyasins and householders who had come from far and near to pay their homage to the great Guru on this sacred day, have been streaming in and out of Siva's Kutir.

Today Siva's ever-blissful countenance shone with a glow of That Inexpressible Something which magnetises the atmosphere, draws every one near, removes the birth-and-death fear, and makes the path clear. There is peace: and the peace permeates his entire being and overflows and floods all who bow to him. There is bliss: and this bliss is infectious, and the infection is life-long. There is depth in his eyes: and the near Siva appears to be far away: and this far-away seems to be within oneself.

Everyone went in and stretched himself on the ground before the August Presence, in one long prostration. I am thine, Oh Siva' spoke the heart. I am Thou: That thou art' glittered the radiant message on Siva's face. Hardly a word was exchanged. Occasionally a 'May God bless you' was heard. We talked to him in the most sacred language: he blessed us in the same divine tongue. Silence was the word: a silence that was at once pregnant with the utterance of the Vedas and the Upanishads and all Sastras.

Adwaita Para Brahma Sastrigal was initiated into Sannyasa, with the name Adwaitananda. The economist in Siva does not permit the new recruit's old clothes to be thrown into the Ganges-as it is done in some other Maths. When these clothes can be given to someone who could wear them, why throw them into the Ganges? 'Oh Dayanandaji, give these to the health officer,' says Siva. Health Officer is what Siva calls the scavenger by. The clothes are dirty. They are not clean. First wash them with soap and then give them to the health officer.'

That is our Guru Siva. The gift is not an act of charity: but an offering to the Lord seated in the heart of the receiver. The instruction reflects this Bhavana. Follow his glorious example and achieve the Liberation that he has achieved. That, by the way, was the gist of the inspiring discourse which Chidanandaji delivered on the sacred occasion. He said that a disciple, like the full moon, should faithfully and completely, reflect the rays of Guru, the sun.

Guru Maharaj Guru Jaya Jaya

Sivananda Sat Guru Jaya Jaya

OM TAT SAT

SIVANANDARPANAMASTU

Thank You